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*Elected by the Trustees, April 4th, 1843.*

ALBERT G. GREENE,  
JOHN HOWLAND,  
ROMEO ELTON.

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## C I R C U L A R .

The Society would call the attention of members and correspondents, to the following subjects :

1. Topographical Sketches of towns and villages, including an account of their soil, agriculture, manufactures, commerce, natural curiosities and statistics.

2. Sketches of the history of the settlement and rise of such towns and villages ; and of the introduction and progress of commerce, manufactures, and the arts, in them.

3. Biographical Notices of original settlers, revolutionary patriots, and other distinguished men who have resided in this State.

4. Original letters and documents, and papers illustrating any of these subjects ; particularly those which shew the private habits, manners or pursuits of our ancestors, or are connected with the general history of this State.

5. Sermons, orations, occasional discourses and addresses, books, pamphlets, almanacs and newspapers, printed in this State ; and manuscripts, especially those written by persons born or residing in this State.

6. Accounts of the Indian tribes which formerly inhabited any part of this State, their numbers and condition when first visited by the whites, their general character and peculiar customs and manners, their wars and treaties, and their original grants to our ancestors.

7. The Indian names of the towns, rivers, islands, bays, and other remarkable places within this State, and the traditional import of those names.

8. Besides these, the Society will receive donations of any other books pamphlets, manuscripts and printed documents.



## PREFACE.

The Rhode-Island Historical Society had long been desirous that a History of Providence should be prepared by one of their number, as soon as the requisite materials could be gathered. They were therefore gratified by knowing that the task had been undertaken by one of their earliest associates, upon whose care and fidelity, reliance could be placed.

The Society most cheerfully bear testimony to the industry which Judge Staples has devoted to the work; and present this volume to the citizens of Rhode-Island, as a faithful record of the characters and deeds of their fathers; and to the American people, as a valuable addition to that body of local annals upon which the future historians of our country must principally depend for materials for their more elaborate and extended works.

ALBERT G. GREENE,	} Committee of	
JOHN HOWLAND,		} Publication.
ROMEO ELTON,		

*Providence, June, 1843.*



A N N A L S  
OF  
THE TOWN OF PROVIDENCE,  
FROM ITS  
FIRST SETTLEMENT,  
TO THE  
ORGANIZATION OF THE CITY GOVERNMENT,  
IN JUNE, 1832.

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BY WILLIAM R. STAPLES.

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PROVIDENCE:  
PRINTED BY KNOWLES AND VOSE.  
1843.



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## P R E F A C E.

THE only historical publications relating to Rhode-Island, which have emanated from Rhode-Island men, are, Simplicity's Defence against Seven-Headed Policy, Callender's Century Sermon, Hopkins' History of Providence, Potter's Early History of Narragansett, Pitman's Centennial Discourse, and Bull's Sketches of the History of the State.

The first of these, is the production of Samuel Gorton, one of the first settlers of Warwick. It was originally published by him in London, in 1646. It has since been re-published, as the second volume of the Collections of the Rhode-Island Historical Society. It contains a narration of some events which transpired in Warwick, during a few of the first years after its settlement.

Callender's Sermon, is a historical discourse which was delivered by John Callender, pastor of the first Baptist church in Newport, in 1738, at the close of the first century of the existence of the English settlements on the island of Rhode-Island. It embraces a brief history of those settlements, together with the events of general interest which had occurred in other parts of the colony. No publication of the kind deserves higher praise for impartiality, candor, and research. An edition of this work was published in 1838, with extensive notes by Professor Elton. Valuable as the original work is, the notes of Mr. Elton have added much of value and interest to it; but the historical events are not brought down, beyond the time of its delivery.

Hopkins' History of Providence first appeared in the Providence Gazette, in 1762. It has since been re-published in the Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society. The author was Stephen Hopkins, who for several years, sustained the office of Governor of the Colony of Rhode-Island. It contains the history of the Town of Providence, from its settlement down to 1645. It is entitled to confidence, for its general correctness.



Potter's Early History of Narragansett, makes the third volume of the Collections of the Rhode-Island Historical Society. This is a very valuable work, compiled with great care, from authentic sources. It relates, almost exclusively, to that part of the State known as the Narragansett country.

In 1636, Judge Pitman delivered an address to the citizens of Providence, on the completion of the second century since the settlement of the Town. This was immediately printed. It is a fine historical discourse, but it does not pretend to be a History.

Bull's Sketches of the History of the State, were published in the Rhode-Island Republican, at Newport. The author was Henry Bull, now deceased, well known throughout the State at least, as a gentleman of great industry and historical research.—These sketches contain the greater part of the public documents which relate to the State in the infancy of the various settlements within it. The inferences and remarks of Mr. Bull, and his views in relation to his subject, are well worthy of attention.

Historical discourses have more recently, been delivered before several religious societies in the state. These generally relate to the societies before which they were delivered, and are very valuable as containing minute details in their histories. Among the most interesting of these, may be named, Ross' Discourse before the first Baptist church in Newport; Hall's, before the first Congregational Society, and Hague's before the first Baptist Society, in Providence.

Most of the States in the Union, and most of the large cities and towns, have produced their local historians. With the exceptions before mentioned, neither the State of Rhode-Island, nor any of the municipal corporations within it, have, as yet, any printed account of their rise and progress, unless the incidental notices which they have received from the historians of other states, may be considered as such. These notices are short and unsatisfactory. The town, state, or nation that borrows a historian from its neighbors, must expect to have its virtues forgotten and its vices magnified.

The ensuing work does not assume to be a History of Providence. The object of the author has been to collect facts for the future historian, and to classify and arrange them, chrono-



logically, with only so many of his own remarks, as were necessary to connect them together and make them understood. In his attempt, he is aware that he has sometimes embodied facts and documents, intimately connected with, and forming a part of, the history of the State. Without doing this, he deemed it impossible, in some instances, to give a fair view of the acts of the Town; while, in others, the proceedings of the State appeared to be founded upon and to have been the natural effects of, the doings of the Town. Besides this, in early times, the dividing line between the state, or rather the colony, and the town history was, by no means, so distinctly defined as now. For these reasons, he hopes his readers will pardon him, if he has trespassed upon the future historian of the State. Others may suppose that some of the facts collected are quite too minute and trifling. The object of the author being as before expressed, he believed himself less liable to censure for matters inserted, than for matters omitted. His aim throughout, has been, to omit no circumstance which might serve to illustrate the growth of the Town, or the changes which have taken place in the habits, the business, and the pursuits of the inhabitants.

Many of the materials for this work were obtained from the office of the Secretary of State, and from the City Clerk's office. The General Assembly of the State and the City Council, upon the author's application, gave him leave to take their early records and files from the offices where by law they are deposited, and to make extracts and copies from them, at pleasure. The like permission was given him by the Historical Society of the State. He availed himself of this privilege, and the records and files of both State and City have been sedulously examined. The permission given him by the Society, opened to him their historical treasures, included in which, are the results of the antiquarian life of the late Theodore Foster, and many of the collections of the late venerable Moses Brown. While he thus acknowledges his obligations to the State, to the City, and to the Historical Society, he is not unmindful of the kindness of the keepers of those offices, nor of the numerous individuals who have likewise aided him in his labors. The early historians of Plymouth, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New-England, as well as the works relating to Rhode-Island first alluded to, have



also been examined. The author, at first, resolved to append notes of reference to the authorities upon which he has relied, and to the places in which the originals of the published documents may be found. This course, on second thought, he abandoned, because it seemed calculated to prove the extent of his researches, rather than to aid the reader; and besides, the nature of the documents copied, will, in most instances, determine the place where the originals are deposited.

No alterations have been made in the documents published, excepting only in their orthography, which has been changed to that in general use at the present time. If such change deprives them of one innate mark of authenticity, it also renders them more easily read and understood. The orthography of Indian names of persons and places has been strictly preserved in the documents published. In the text, the author has used, what he believed to be, the common orthography of such names. It is by no means pleasing to see the same name, in the course of two or three pages, spelt in as many different ways; yet, as such diversity prevailed with our ancestors, who learned the language only by the ear, it has been preserved, with the wish that it may aid the curious philologist in his researches.

Where any fact is referred to, the date of it is given in new style, so far as relates to the year and the month. Bearing in mind, that, according to old style, March was the first month of the year, many supposed errors in the following work will disappear. If absolute exactness is desirable, in the date of any event occurring in or previous to 1752, the reader will add eleven days to the date given.

The author avows a decided preference for facts over words, and for things over names. His labors have been among the first, and his researches have been after them. The materials here published were principally found where a like disregard for terms and language prevails. These circumstances may have induced in him an unwarranted carelessness in style and expression. If, however, he shall succeed in exciting a taste for things of old time, and in arousing attention to the facts which make up the history of Providence, his object will be accomplished.



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# ANNALS OF PROVIDENCE.

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## CHAPTER FIRST.

### GENERAL HISTORY.

FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENT, IN 1636, TO THE RECEPTION OF THE  
FIRST CHARTER TO THE COLONY, IN 1644.

THE first permanent European settlement within the present limits of New-England, was made at Plymouth, in the year 1620. The colonists were Englishmen by birth, and of that denomination of Christians since called Doctrinal Puritans. Their former pastor, the Rev. John Robinson, is styled by Neale, "the father of the Independents." He and his congregation had been compelled, some years before, to remove to Holland, on account of their nonconformity to the rites and ceremonies of the English established church. There, they enjoyed their peculiar religious opinions in peace; but the language and customs of the country continually reminded them, that they were in a land of strangers. This, connected with the reflection, that their descendants would be aliens and, perhaps, enemies to the land of their birth, induced them to seek a permanent refuge from English persecution in some remote part of the English possessions in America. Next to the desire of worshipping God according to the dictates of



their own consciences, was the wish to transmit to their descendants the privileges of English subjects. The spirit of colonization pervaded, at that time, a large proportion of their fellow subjects, and rendered it easy for them to make arrangements with one of the large companies established by king James for the settlement of America, for permission to settle within the limits assigned them. Such an arrangement they did conclude with the Virginia Company. They also obtained from king James an intimation, that there they should not be molested for their non-conformity. Allured by the hope of enjoying their religious opinions, under the sanction and protection of their natural prince, they undertook a second pilgrimage, and embarked for the wilderness of America. As it happened, however, their arrangement with the Virginia Company, and their assurance from king James, availed them nothing. They landed far to the Northward of the limits of the Virginia Company, and within the bounds of the Grand Plymouth patent, on the inhospitable shores of Cape Cod, and in the midst of an inclement winter.

The second permanent settlement was made on the borders of Massachusetts Bay. These colonists also were English Puritans. Before they embarked from England, they obtained a patent for their lands from the proprietors of the Grand Plymouth patent, and a charter of incorporation from the king.

Neither of these colonies deemed it important to obtain from the Indians a title to the soil, before they commenced their plantations. They relied, in the first instance, either upon their own actual pos-



session, or on a grant from the king, as sufficient to confer a title to the soil they occupied. They, with all christian governments of their day, assumed the right to determine the religious belief of the individuals who composed the colony, or who should afterward join them. Without stopping to reflect, how they, individually, had suffered in their native country from the exercise of this same power, and how inefficient all attempts to regulate religious faith by legal enactments had always proved upon conscientious men, they followed on, in the beaten track. The religious standards adopted by these colonies essentially differed from each other. That of Plymouth approximated nearest to the Brownists. They disclaimed communion with the church of England, as well as with the church of Rome. The first settlers of Massachusetts were more liberal in their views. They professed not to separate from the church of England, but only from the errors of that church. At their departure from England, they sought the prayers of "mother church."

Both colonies soon had occasion to use the standards they had established. In each, there were some individuals whose creeds exceeded or fell short of legal measure. Toward these the same power was exerted, though in a less rigorous manner, which had driven the colonists across the Atlantic. The assumption of such a power by any government, will soon find, if in fact it does not create, opportunities for its exercise.

On the fifth day of February, 1631, Roger Williams arrived in Boston. He had taken orders in the



established church in England, but had subsequently become a nonconformist and a rigid separatist, from that church. This change in his religious opinions, induced his removal to this country. The Governor and Assistants of the colony on Massachusetts Bay, soon ascertained that his opinions did not conform to their established standard. The church at Salem invited him to become their Teacher, in the place of Mr. Higginson, then lately deceased; Mr. Skelton being their Pastor. In April, the Court of Assistants wrote to Mr. Endicott, one of the leading men of the Salem Church, that "they marvelled that they would choose" Mr. Williams, "without advising with the Council; and withal desiring them that they would forbear to proceed, till they had conferred about it." They stated as a reason for this interference with the acknowledged rights of the Salem church, as an independent church, that "Mr. Williams had refused to join with the congregation at Boston, because they would not make a public declaration of their repentance for having communion with the churches of England while they tarried there; and besides had declared his opinion, that the magistrate might not punish a breach of the Sabbath, nor any other offence that was a breach of the first table." Whether the first allegation was true, or whether accompanied with any explanation or exceptions, or whether it was an inference of the court from other declarations and opinions of Mr. Williams, cannot be ascertained from any of his writings. The court undoubtedly believed the statement to be correct. The second allegation—by which it was intended, that the civil



magistrate, as such, had no right to punish for any violation of duties toward God—was true, in its utmost extent. Mr. Williams has the honor of being the first, in modern times, to protest against the interference of the civil power with the rights of conscience. While he claimed the privilege of forming his own opinions on religious subjects, he claimed also the same right for all others, however they might differ from him. Notwithstanding this difficulty, Mr. Williams was admitted a freeman in May following. He remained in Salem until into summer, when he removed to Plymouth, where he was received as the assistant of Mr. Ralph Smith, the Pastor of the Plymouth church. His connexion with that church continued about two years, when it was dissolved at his own instance. He then returned to Salem. About the time of his return, the ministers of Massachusetts established regular meetings, once a fortnight, at each others houses, for mutual aid and advice. Mr. Skelton and Mr. Williams opposed these meetings, as tending to endanger the independence of churches, and to introduce into them the Presbyterian form of government. This opposition gave offence to the ministers. In December of the same year, (1633) the Governor and Assistants had under consideration, a treatise that Mr. Williams had sent to them, the design of which was to show that no charter or patent from the king of England, could confer on the colonists, any right to the lands they occupied, as against the Indians. It was not written for publication, but only for the satisfaction of the Governor of Plymouth, and with the design, probably,



of inducing the colonists to purchase a title from the Indians. This treatise gave offence to the magistrates of Massachusetts. At the next court, however, Mr. Williams "gave satisfaction of his intention and loyalty," "so it was left and nothing done in it." That he never abandoned these opinions, but always acted consistently with them, after transactions will fully prove.

Mr. Skelton died in August, 1634, and Mr. Williams soon after became pastor of the Salem church.

The Governor and Assistants of Massachusetts, at a meeting on the 27th day of November, 1634, directed a summons to be sent to Mr. Williams to appear at the next court "for teaching publicly against the King's patent, and our great sin in claiming right thereby to this country, &c., and for usual terming the churches of England, anti-christian." In April following he was again sent for by the court, for teaching "publicly that a magistrate ought not to tender an oath to an unregenerate man." In July Mr. Williams appeared before the General Court. He was there charged, in addition to what has been already stated, with holding that "a man ought not to pray with unregenerate persons" or "give thanks after the sacrament or after meat." These opinions of Mr. Williams being adjudged by the Court to be "erroneous and very dangerous," both he and the church which had called him to office, were notified "to make satisfaction before the next General Court, or to expect sentence." The inhabitants of Salem preferred a petition to this court "for some land in Marblehead neck which



they did challege as belonging to their town." The court refused to grant this petition, "because they had chosen Mr. Williams their teacher, while he stood under question of authority." This refusal produced a great excitement in Salem, and the church there, following the example of the other churches in Mr. Williams' case, wrote "to the other churches to admonish the magistrates of this, as a heinous sin, and likewise the deputies." It should be borne in mind that none but members of churches could be magistrates, or even freemen, at this time. It is probable that the other churches, not feeling so deeply as did the Salem church the effect of this refusal, neglected to comply with this request; for on the 16th day of August, Mr. Williams being confined by sickness, wrote to his church, that he would not communicate with the other churches, nor with his own, unless they united with him in refusing communion with the rest. In the following October Mr. Williams was convented before the General Court, and charged with the two letters, the one from his church to the other churches, and the other from him to his own church. He justified both of them, and after an ineffectual attempt to convince him of his errors, on the third day of November, the following sentence was passed against him.

"Whereas Mr. Roger Williams, one of the elders of the church of Salem, hath broached and divulged divers new and dangerous opinions, against the authority of the magistrates, as also written letters of defamation, both of the magistrates and churches there, and that before any conviction, and yet main-



taineth the same without retraction ; it is, therefore, ordered, that the said Mr. Williams shall depart out of this jurisdiction within six weeks now next ensuing, which if he neglect to perform, it shall be lawful for the Governor and two of the magistrates to send him to some place out of this jurisdiction, not to return any more without license from the court." Subsequently he obtained permission to remain in Salem until Spring, on condition that he would not attempt to draw others to his opinions. On the 11th of January, 1636, the Governor and Assistants sent for him "to come presently to Boston to be shipped, &c." they having determined that he had disregarded their injunction "not to go about to draw others to his opinions," and "did use to entertain company in his house, and to preach to them even of such points as he had been censured for ;" and it was agreed to send him into England by a ship then ready to depart. The reason was, because "he had drawn above twenty persons to his opinions, and they were intending to erect a plantation about the Narragansett Bay, from whence the infection would easily spread into these churches." He returned an answer to this summons that "he could not come without hazard to his life, &c." Upon this a pinnace was sent to apprehend him and put him on board a ship, then lying at Nantasket, bound for England. When the messengers arrived at Salem, Mr. Williams had been gone three days. It is highly probable he was informed by some friend of the intention of the Governor and Assistants to send for him.

The preceding facts and dates are derived principally from Gov. Winthrop's Journal.



From Salem he went to Seekonk, and procuring a grant of land from Massasoit, at Manton's neck on the Seekonk river, "began to build and plant there." Here he received a letter from Governor Winslow, of Plymouth, stating, that he was within the bounds of the Plymouth patent, that they, of Plymouth, "were loath to displease the Bay," and advising him to cross that river, where he would be beyond any English claim. This advice was soon followed, and in the latter part of the Spring, or in the beginning of the Summer of 1636, he landed, for the first time, with intent to commence a settlement, within the limits of Providence. It is impossible to fix the exact date of this event. That it was after planting time, may be inferred from a remark in a letter of his, in which he says his removal occasioned him "the loss of a harvest that year." That it was before the 26th day of July is certain from the fact, that the Governor of Massachusetts, on that day, received a letter from Mr. Williams at Providence, informing him of the murder of one of their inhabitants, (Mr. Oldham,) by the Pequods.

At the first settlement of Plymouth, the Narragansetts were, undoubtedly, the most numerous and powerful of any of the tribes in New England. The pestilence which, a few years before, had almost depopulated some parts of the country, had not affected them. Their principal town was in the southwestern part of the State of Rhode-Island. All the tribes on the western side of Narragansett Bay were their tributaries. Ousamequin or Massasoiet, Sachem of the Wampanoags, on the eastern side of the



Bay, acknowledged to Mr. Williams, "that he and his tribe had submitted themselves to the Narragansetts." "The Sachems of Shawmut and Neponsit," says Morton's Memorial, "acknowledged a degree of subjection to Massasoiet." At the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth, Conanicus and Miantonomi, uncle and nephew, were chief Sachems of the Narragansetts.

The Pequods on the west and the Wampanoags on the east, were the hereditary enemies of the Narragansetts. During the prevalence of the pestilence before alluded to, the Narragansetts secured an ascendancy over the latter. The Wampanoags lost their independence and became the unwilling tributaries of the Narragansetts. Massasoiet anxiously sought an opportunity to free himself and tribe from this yoke. These passages in Indian history in a great measure account for the readiness with which he and his tributaries around Massachusetts Bay submitted themselves to the handful of enfeebled whites settled at Plymouth.

The Pequods were a far more warlike nation than the Narragansetts under Conanicus and Miantonomi. They nearly or quite equalled the Narragansetts in numbers. Their sachem, Sassacus, was a great warrior, and he had infused his own warlike spirit into his subjects. They had extended their conquests every way, and it was with difficulty that the Narragansetts withstood them. Sassacus saw with pleasure the power of the Narragansetts weakened by the defection of the Wampanoags. But, as a wise and politic prince, he saw in that defection, his



own ruin, and that of all of the tribes around him. He proposed, therefore, to the Narragansetts, to bury the hatchet of their private difficulties, and to unite, and drive the white man into the ocean. The Narragansetts had become averse to war. They had engaged in agriculture to a considerable extent. They made a great part of the peag which circulated as money among the tribes, and they excelled their neighbors in the manufacture of pottery. Under Tashtassuck, the ancestor of Conanicus and Miantonomi, they had attained their power and extended their conquests, while under the latter sachems, they were making rapid progress in the arts of peace, and approximating a state of semi-civilization. They must have lost their warlike enterprise. Unless it had been so, they would never have so tamely borne the defection of Massasoiet. The handful of arrows tied with the snake skin, the declaration of war, which they sent on that occasion, to the English at Plymouth, would have been followed with a war of extermination against the whites. The difference in numbers would have ensured them the victory. Instead, however, of following up this declaration of war with actual hostilities, they seem to have contented themselves with refusing all intercourse with the strangers. Mr. Williams describes them as being exceedingly shy of the whites, and refusing to sell them land. It was in vain that Sassacus pointed to the settlements of the whites which were springing up, as if by magic, around them. In vain he told them, that the stranger had lighted his fires along the whole coast, and upon the bank of every



navigable stream—in vain he pointed to the smoke of the white man's cabin, as it rose in every direction around them. He attempted, in vain, to rouse anew the warlike spirit of the Narragansetts, and to induce them to make common cause with him against the intruder.

While negotiations of this character were passing between the Narragansett and Pequod sachems, Mr. Williams approached the wigwams of the Narragansetts. During his residence at Plymouth and Salem, he had become acquainted with their sachems. The character of religious teacher, which he bore, ensured him from the savages some tokens of respect. And it may well be believed, that even before this period, he had devoted some portion of his time to their service. He had gained their confidence to such a degree, that when he sought from them a refuge and a shelter, it was not only readily granted, but he was able to frustrate the designs of the Pequods.

Whether Mr. Williams was accompanied by any persons in his flight from Salem is unknown. Mr. Cotton, in his "Reply to Mr. Williams his Examination, &c." page 8, says that some of Mr. Williams' friends "went to the place appointed by himself, beforehand, to make provision of housing and other necessities for him against his coming." This may be so, but it seems hardly possible that it should be, as he could not have anticipated the summons from the Governor and Assistants, which caused his flight. Among those who joined him while at Seekonk, were, William Harris, John Smith, (miller,)



Joshua Verin, Thomas Angell, and Francis Wickes. These, with Mr. Williams, composed the first settlers of Providence. The number is ascertained from a letter from Joshua Verin to the town, which will be given hereafter, and the names are gathered from the same source, and from a plea made by Mr. Williams before certain commissioners of the King, in 1677. Tradition says that they first landed on "the Slate rock," on the bank of the Seekonk river, near the residence of his Excellency Governor Fenner, and that, as they approached the shore, they were saluted with "What cheer, netop," by an Indian from the hill. That there is some foundation for the tradition appears from the fact, that a tract of land adjoining this rock, has ever since borne the name of "What cheer." Under this name, it was assigned to Mr. Williams in the first division of lands among the settlers. It has also been handed down by tradition, that Mr. Williams and his companions, after exchanging salutations with the Indian, pursued their voyage, around Fox Point and up Providence river, to a point a little south of St. John's Church. A fine spring of water there, which has ever since borne the name of Williams' Spring, is supposed to indicate the place of their first settlement.

This small company was soon increased by new emigrations, both from Plymouth and Massachusetts. It is impossible to ascertain the precise date of the arrival of any of them. The records, as may be supposed, were very scanty at first, and these have become mutilated and illegible in many places. The date of the first entry is "16th day 4 month" (June.)



The year, if ever inserted, is now illegible. There are two entries under this date, one imposing a fine for not attending at the hour appointed for town-meetings, the other providing for the monthly choice of a town treasurer. From the latter it would seem, that they held meetings, monthly. The next record is under date of 13th of 6 mo. (August.) It contains an order, altering a previous law, not recorded, (which required every person to be propounded one month before he could be received into the town,) so that upon urgent necessity, a special meeting could be called, and a person received after standing propounded for three or four days. The next proceedings recorded are under date of 3d of 10 mo. (December.) A fine was imposed at this meeting on every person absent from any town-meeting, and it made it the duty of him "who keeps the books in that month, to observe and take notice who is wanting, and present his name to the town." From this it would seem that a clerk was chosen at every meeting. The only officer whose election is recorded is Thomas Olney, town treasurer. This was under date of August 13. These comprise all the entries made on the first page of the town records. The next page begins with "Orders and agreements, the 2d year of the Plantation," without any date of day, month or year. In the entry under this date, it appears that William Carpenter, Benedict Arnold, William Reynolds, Thomas Angell, Mrs. Alice Daniels, (afterwards the wife of John Greene, Senior,) Mary Sweet, and Edward Cope, had each received a grant of land from the Town, about that



time, as they were required to pay a certain sum, not legible in the records, "in consideration of ground at present granted unto them." Similar grants had, before this, been made to Robert Cole, Francis Weston, and Richard Waterman. This appears from the second order, under the same date, imposing a penalty on each of them "for damage in case they do not improve their grounds." All future comers, by the third order, were required to pay a certain sum, not legible, "upon the grant of a like portion of ground." Every person was prohibited from selling "his field or his lot granted in our liberties to any person but to an inhabitant, without consent of the town." From an entry under date of 28th of 12 mo. (February,) it appears that William Field was then at Providence. Under date of the 10th of 4 month, (June,) is an order confirming certain grants of land to John Greene, Thomas James, Ezekiel Holyman, John Throckmorton, William Arnold, and Stukely Westcott. On the 21st of the preceding month, the following vote was passed: "Joshua Verin, for breach of covenant in restraining liberty of conscience, shall be withheld the liberty of voting, till he declare the contrary." We are indebted to Governor Winthrop for an account of the manner in which Verin "restrained the liberty of conscience," and for the circumstances attending his trial and disfranchisement. After recounting the trouble that a Mrs. Oliver had given the ministers and magistrates of Massachusetts, by her contumacious heresy, he adds: "At Providence, also, the devil was not idle. For whereas at their first coming thither, Mr. Wil-



liams and the rest did make an order, that no man should be molested for his conscience, now men's wives, and children, and servants, claimed liberty to go to all religious meetings, though never so often, or though private, upon the week days; and because one Verin refused to let his wife go to Mr. Williams' so oft as she was called for, they required to have him censured. But there stood up one Arnold, a witty man, of their company, and withstood it, telling them that when he consented to that order, he never intended it should extend to the breach of any ordinance of God, such as the subjection of wives to their husbands, &c., and gave divers solid reasons against it. Then one Greene, he replied, that, if they should restrain their wives, &c., all the women in the country would cry out of them, &c. Arnold answered him thus: Did you pretend to leave the Massachusetts, because you would not offend God to please men, and would you now break an ordinance and commandment of God to please women? Some were of opinion that if Verin would not suffer his wife to have her liberty, the church should dispose of her to some other man, who would use her better. Arnold told them, that it was not the woman's desire to go so oft from home, but only Mr. Williams' and others. In conclusion, when they would have censured Verin, Arnold told them that it was against their own order, for Verin did that he did, out of conscience, and their order was that no man should be censured for his conscience." Probably Gov. Winthrop learned the story from Verin



himself, for he left Providence soon after this occurrence and removed to Salem.

Little further can be collected about Verin. The following letter from him to the town is inserted as containing more information relative to the early proceedings of the settlers, than in relation to himself.

“Gentlemen, and countrymen of the Town of Providence. This is to certify you, that I look upon my purchase of the town of Providence to be my lawful right. In my travel, I have enquired and do find it is recoverable according to law, for my coming away could not disinherit me. Some of you cannot but recollect, that we six which came first should have the first convenience, as it was put in practice, first, by our house lots, and second, by the meadows on Wonasquatucket river; and then, those that were admitted by us into the purchase to have the next which were about, but it is contrary to law, reason, and equity, for to dispose of my part, without my consent. Therefore, deal not worse with me than we dealt with the Indians, for we made conscience of purchasing of it of them, and hazarded our lives. Therefore we need not, nor any one of us ought, to be denied of our purchase. So, hoping you will take it into your serious consideration, and to give me reasonable satisfaction, I rest

Yours in the way of right and equity,

JOSHUA VERIN.

From Salem, the 21st Nov. 1650.

This to be delivered to the deputies of the town of Providence, to be presented to the whole town.”

This letter was laid before the town at their quarter-meeting, April 27, 1651, and the clerk was directed to answer it, which he did as follows :

SIR—The Town of Providence having received, read, and considered yours dated the 21st November, 1650, have ordered



me to signify unto you, that if you shall come unto court, and prove your right, they will do you justice. Per me.

GRE. DEXTER, Town Clerk.

It has been before observed, that Mr. Williams both at Plymouth and Salem, contended that the Indians were the sole owners of the soil they occupied, and that a patent or grant from the king of England could convey no title in them to any one. The promulgation of these sentiments formed one of the principal charges against him, and contributed not a little, to his final banishment from Massachusetts. That they were the honest convictions of his own mind is evinced by the fact that he reduced them to practice. When he "began to build and plant" at Seekonk, he obtained a grant of land from Massasoit. That a similar grant of Providence was obtained at or before the settlement there, appears from the following deed.

"At Nanhiggansick the 24th of the first month commonly called March, in the second year of our plantation or planting at Mooshausick or Providence. Memorandum, that we Cau-naunicus and Meauntunomi, the two chief sachems of Nanhiggansick, having two years since sold unto Roger Williams, the lands and meadows upon the two fresh rivers, called Mooshausick and Wanasquatucket do now by these presents, establish and confirm the bounds of those lands, from the river and fields at Pawtucket, the great hill of Neotaconkonitt on the north west, and the town of Mashapauge on the west. As also in consideration of the many kindnesses and services he hath continually done for us, both with our friends of Massachusetts, as also at Quinickicut and Apaum or Plymouth, we do freely give unto him all that land from those rivers, reaching to Pawtuxet



river, as also the grass and meadows upon the said Pawtuxet river. In witness whereof we have hereunto set our hands.

The mark of



Caunaunicus.

The mark of



Meauntunomi.

In the presence of

The mark of ✕ Seatash.

The mark of \* Assotemewit.

1639 Memorandum 3. mo. 9th day. This was all again confirmed by Miantonomi, he acknowledged this his act and hand, up the streams of Pawtucket and Pawtuxet without limits, we might have for our use of cattle. Witness hereof

ROGER WILLIAMS.

BENEDICT ARNOLD.

This is the earliest conveyance, in the records of Providence. The body of the deed is in the hand writing of Mr. Williams, the clause signed by him is in the hand writing of Thomas James. It is probable that the prior conveyance referred to in this deed, was a verbal one. This is a confirmation of the precedent grant, or rather a declaration of the bounds of the lands conveyed by it. It contains no words of transfer or sale of the "lands and meadows upon the two fresh rivers Mooshausick and Wanasquatucket." It would seem also that it was the intention of the sachems to enlarge the bounds of their previous grant, for the deed, in technical language conveys "all the lands from those rivers, reaching to Pawtuxet river." But upon the whole, the instrument is so inartificially drawn, purporting to transfer only a life estate by its terms, when undoubtedly the



fee was intended to be conveyed, as to render it very doubtful whether Mr. Williams ever pursued the study of the law, as his biographer asserts, under the strictly technical Sir Edward Coke. By this deed, and the previous conveyance, be it what it may, the title to the land, vested in Mr. Williams alone. The consideration, such as it was, passed from him alone. In a letter from him to the town a long time afterward, speaking of Providence and Pawtuxet he says, "they were mine own as truly as any man's coat upon his back." This was afterwards denied by some of the proprietors as will subsequently appear. It was not however Mr. Williams' object to retain the whole purchase to himself, or to make his companions in exile in any way dependant on him. His son Daniel, in a letter to the town dated August 24, 1710, says, "if a covetous man had that opportunity as he had, most of this town would have been his tenants." It was contended afterwards by some of the inhabitants that the original purchase was made by Mr. Williams as the agent of the whole company, and that they refunded to him their proportion of the original cost. This he denied in the strongest terms. Soon after the purchase he executed the following deed to his companions. He subsequently executed two other deeds, which will be given hereafter. Why this is called his "Initial deed," will be very apparent on its perusal.

"Memorandum, That I, R. W. having formerly purchased of Canonicus and Miantonomi, this our situation or plantation of New Providence, viz. the two fresh rivers Wonas. and Moosh.



and the grounds and meadows thereupon, in consideration of £30 received from the inhabitants of said place, do freely and fully, pass, grant and make over equal right and power of enjoying and disposing the same grounds and lands unto my loving friends and neighbors S W. W A. T J. R C. J G. J T. W H. W C. T O. F W. R W. and E. H. and such others as the major part of us shall admit into the same fellowship of vote with us. As also, I do freely, make and pass over equal right and power of enjoying and disposing the said land and ground reaching from the aforesaid rivers unto the great river Pawtuxet, with the grass and meadow thereupon, which was so lately given and granted by the two aforesaid sachems to me. Witness my hand.

R. W.

There is no date to the only copy of this deed now in existence. Informal as it appears, it was the only evidence the town had, that Mr. Williams had parted with any portion of the lands conveyed to him by the Sachems. That they scarcely deemed a conveyance necessary is evinced by the carelessness with which this was kept. The probability is, that the original deed from the Sachems was deposited with and kept by the clerk of the Town, and the possession of that was esteemed equivalent to a conveyance, or if it were not, implicit confidence was reposed in Mr. Williams that he would execute the requisite deeds on request.

On the sixth day of December, 1661, a committee appointed at a previous meeting to wait on Mr. Williams and procure from him a deed of the first purchase, made a report, and on the thirteenth of the same month, another committee was appointed to procure the signature of Mrs. Williams to the deed. It is presumed that the following deed was executed in pursuance of these requests.



"Be it known unto all men by these presents, that I Roger Williams, of the Town of Providence, in the Narraganset Bay, in New-England, having in the year 1634 and in the year 1635 had several treaties with Conanicusse and Miantonome, the chief Sachems of the Narragansetts, and in the end purchased of them the lands and meadows upon the two fresh rivers called Mooshassick and Wanasquatucket, the two Sachems having by a deed under their hands two years after the sale thereof established and confirmed the bounds of these lands from the river and fields of Pawtuckqut and the great hill of Neotaconconitt on the north-west, and the town of Mashapauge on the west, notwithstanding I had the frequent promise of Miantonomi my kind friend, that it should not be land that I should want about these bounds mentioned, provided that I satisfied the Indians there inhabiting, I having made covenant of peaceable neighborhood with all the Sachems and natives round about us; and having in a sense of God's merciful providence unto me in my distress, called the place, Providence. I designed it might be for a shelter for persons distressed for conscience, I then considering the condition of divers of my distressed countrymen, I communicated my said purchase to my loving friends John Throckmorton, William Arnold, William Harris, Stukely Westcott, John Greene, sen., Thomas Olney, sen., Richard Waterman and others who then desired to take shelter here with me, and in succession unto so many others as we should receive into the fellowship and society of enjoying and disposing of the said purchase; and besides the first that were admitted, our town records declare that afterwards we received Chad Brown, William Field, Thomas Harris, sen., William Wickenden, Robert Williams, Gregory Dexter and others, as our town book declares; and whereas, by God's merciful assistance, I was the procurer of the purchase, not by monies nor payment, the natives being so shy and jealous, that monies could not do it, but by that language, acquaintance, and favor with the natives and other advantages which it pleased God to give me, and also bore the charges and venture of all the gratuities which I gave to the great Sachems, and other Sachems and natives round about us, and lay engaged for a loving and peaceable neighborhood with them to my great charge and



travel, it was, therefore, thought by some loving friends, that I should receive some loving consideration and gratuity, and it was agreed between us, that every person that should be admitted into the fellowship of enjoying lands and disposing of the purchase, should pay thirty shillings into the public stock, and first about £30 should be paid unto myself by thirty shillings a person, as they were admitted ; this sum I received in love to my friends, and with respect to a town and place of succor for the distressed as aforesaid. I do acknowledge the said sum and payment as full satisfaction. And whereas in the year 1637, so called, I delivered the deed subscribed by the two aforesaid chief Sachems, so much thereof as concerneth the aforementioned lands from myself and my heirs unto the whole number of purchasers, with all and every power, right and title therein, reserving only unto myself one single share equal unto any of the rest of that number, I now again in a more formal way, under my hand and seal, confirm my former resignation of that deed of the lands aforesaid and bind myself, my heirs, my executors, my administrators and assigns never to molest any of the said persons already received or hereafter to be received into the society of purchasers as aforesaid, but they, their heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, shall at all times quietly and peaceably enjoy the premises and every part thereof ; and I do further, by these presents, bind myself, my heirs, my executors, my administrators and assigns, never to lay claim nor cause any claim to be laid, to any of the lands aforementioned, or unto any part or parcel thereof, more than unto mine own single share, by virtue or pretence of any former bargain, sale or mortgage whatsoever or jointures, thirds or entails made by me the said Roger Williams or of any other person either, for, by, through or under me. In witness thereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 20th day of December in the present year 1661.

ROGER WILLIAMS. [L.S.]

Signed, sealed and delivered, in presence of us.

THOMAS SMITH,

JOSEPH CARPENTER.

I Mary Williams wife unto Roger Williams do assent unto



the premises. Witness my hand this 20th day of December, in the present year 1661.

The mark of M W MARY WILLIAMS.

Acknowledged and subscribed before me.

WILLIAM FIELD, Assistant."

The treaties in 1634 and 1635 referred to in this deed, probably gave rise to the suggestion made by Governor Winthrop before quoted, of the intention of Mr. Williams and his adherents to make a settlement on Narragansett Bay. It was in conferences held with the Narragansetts while he resided at Plymouth and Salem that he acquired that knowledge of their language and that influence in their councils, which enabled him to overcome their shyness and jealousy of the whites. It appears from this deed that the grantees in it never paid any part of the £30 which he received, nor does it contain any expression which would suggest the idea that he acted in the purchase as their agent. The acceptance of this deed and the enrollment of it by the town in their records, is in some degree an acknowledgement of the truth of the recitals contained in it, and the part which he subsequently acted by appointment of the town in procuring other deeds of cession and confirmation from the natives, prove that the town reposed full confidence in his integrity and uprightness. With respect to the dates referred to in this deed, they are probably incorrect. His deed from the Sachems, bears date the 24th of the first month, in the second year of the plantation, corresponding with the 24th day of March, or last day of the year 1637. There is no date to his "initial" deed, but it



was executed the 8th day of October, 1638. This deed was lost long before 1661, and the date 1637 might be intended to refer to the date of the Sachems' deed. Some of the grantees in the "Initial" deed did not leave Massachusetts till 1638.

The town accepted the deed of 1661, and had it entered on their records. This, with the evidence then in existence of the contents of the initial deed, constituted the whole title of the town till 1666. In that year, for some reason not apparent, Mr. Williams executed the following instrument, which is also recorded.

"Providence, 8 of 8th month, 1638, so called.

Memorandum, that I, Roger Williams, having formerly purchased of Conanicus and Miantonomi, this our situation or plantation of New Providence, viz: the two fresh rivers Wonasquatucket and Moosehasick and the grounds and meadows thereupon, in consideration of thirty pounds, received from the inhabitants of the said place, do freely and fully pass, grant and make over equal right and power of enjoying and disposing the same ground and lands unto my loving friends and neighbors, Stukely Westcott, William Arnold, Thomas James, Robert Cole, John Greene, John Throckmorton, William Harris, William Carpenter, Thomas Olney, Francis Weston, Richard Waterman, Ezekiel Holyman and such others as the major part of us shall admit unto the same fellowship of vote with us. As also I do freely make and pass over equal right and power of enjoying and disposing the lands and grounds reaching from the aforesaid rivers unto the great river Pawtuxet and the grass and meadows thereupon, which was so lately granted by the aforesaid Sachems to me.

Witness my hand, Providence 22, 10 mo. 1666, so called.

ROGER WILLIAMS.

This paper and writing given by me about twenty-eight years since, and differs not a tittle, only so is dated as near as we could



guess about the time and the names of the men written in the straight of time and haste are here explained by me.

ROGER WILLIAMS.

In presence of us,

JOHN BROWNE,

JOHN SAYLES,

THOMAS HARRIS, Assistant."

After accepting the initial deed, on the 7th of October 1633, the then thirteen proprietors deemed it expedient to make a division in their purchase, and subject the different parts to different rules of subsequent subdivision. The two parts are known in the records as the "grand purchase of Providence," and "the Pawtuxet purchase." Great dissensions and difficulties grew out of this division.

With respect to the first divisions of land in "the grand purchase of Providence," little can be gathered from the records. Frequent reference is there made to the "home lots" and the "six acre" lots of the purchasers. It has sometimes been supposed that these terms referred to the same lots. There is in the files of the city clerk's office a small paper book which completely refutes this idea. The title of the book is "A revised list (saving corrections with addition) of lands and meadows as they were originally lotted from the beginning of the plantation of Providence in the Narragansett Bay in New-England, unto the (then) inhabitants of the said plantation until anno 16—." First in order are the "home lots," "beginning at the Mile-end cove."

This cove disappeared many years since. It was at the south end of the town between Fox Point and



Wickenden street. "The home lots" all bounded on "the Town Street" on the west, and what is now Hope street on the east. The Town Street in modern times has become South and North Main-streets. The book afore referred to gives the location of fifty-four of these home lots, as follows :

Robert Williams,	Stukely Westcott,
Christopher Unthank,	Ezekiel Holyman,
William Hawkins,	Richard Waterman,
Robert West,	Francis Weston,
Hugh Bewit,	Thomas Angell,
John Lippit,	Thomas Olney,
Matthew Weston,	Robert Cole,
Edward Hart,	A highway,
Thomas Hopkins,	William Carpenter,
Widow Sayer,	John Sweet,
Widow Tiler,	Alice Daniels,
Nicholas Power,	William Harris,
A highway,	John Throckmorton,
William Wickenden,	Roger Williams,
William Man,	Joshua Verin,
William Burrows,	Widow Reeve,
Adam Goodwin,	John Smith,
Thomas Harris,	John Greene, Sen.
Joshua Winsor,	Thomas James,
John Field,	William Arnold,
William Field,	Francis Wickes,
Richard Scott,	Benedict Arnold,
George Rickard,	John Greene, Jun.
John Warner,	Edward Manton,
Chad Brown,	Thomas Painter,
Daniel Abbott,	Mathew Waller,
William Reynolds,	Gregory Dexter.

The highway between the lots of Nicholas Power and William Wickenden, is now known as Power-



street, and that between Robert Cole's and William Carpenter's lots, is now called Meeting-street. The dividing lines between all these lots, run east and west, and many of them may be traced by the walls and fences now standing. Several of these lots have never been transferred by deed.

The northwesterly corner of the Roger Williams lot, is now occupied by the stone house at the corner of North Main-street and Howland's Alley. The spring was on the opposite side of the street. A pump is now set in it. The tide then flowed almost up to the spring, and the street passed along on the shore. By referring to the foregoing list of home lots, a tolerably correct conclusion can be formed as to the order in which the first inhabitants arrived here. The first twelve are found on either hand of their leader. Within their extremes are lots which were set off to the persons under age and the lone women who accompanied them. Those who succeeded them and were admitted inhabitants had their lots set off to them upon the one or the other extreme, thus extending the line as their strength increased.

In addition to the home lots each individual had a "six acre lot" assigned him.

Seven of these lots are located between Mile-end cove and the one set off to Mr. Williams. His lot adjoined "What cheer," and is the last to the north on Seekonk river. Other "six acre lots" were located in other parts of the purchase, as "on the North side of the Wanasquatucket," and "by the west river." There can be no mistake as to the



location of Mr. Williams' six acre lot. The entry in this list is "six acres of Roger Williams with What cheer;" and in a deed that he made of What cheer and his six acre lot to James Elis, Jan. 29, 1667, he recites that in disposing of his purchase unto the "Township or commonality," he reserved to himself "the two Indian fields, called 'What cheer and Saxefrax Hill,'" and that the town afterwards "laid out unto me the aforesaid field, called What cheer, and adjoined my six acre lot unto it." In 1718 the proprietors of the purchase made another division of home or house lots. They divided the lands on the southerly and easterly side of Weybosset street, on the west side of North Main street north of Canal market, and on the south side of Olney street, into one hundred and one house lots, being one for each proprietor, which were drawn for by the proprietors or their assigns. The land on the west side of Main street north of Mile-end cove, was subsequently platted and divided into warehouse lots, and in most cases sold by the proprietors to the owners of the house lots opposite them. With respect to the other lands in the propriety, it was generally disposed of by vote to particular persons, or a division of certain number of acres made to each purchase right, the location of which was left to the individuals interested, to be surveyed by the proprietors' surveyor, allowed by the proprietors or their committee and recorded by the clerk. The returns, as they are called, of the surveyors, constitute the first link in the chain of the title of almost every estate in the county of Providence. The record of



these returns and of subsequent conveyances were made by the clerk chosen by the town, until 1718, after which the proprietors met by themselves and chose their own officers.

During the first years of the colony, it is not probable, that any of the powers of the community were exercised by or delegated to, any portion of its members. The original purchasers, with "such as they received into the same fellowship of vote" with them, met in town meeting, monthly, and there transacted all the business pertaining to their little commonwealth. It is matter of regret that their records from month to month have not been preserved. It would be interesting to peruse the proceedings of a colony of civilized men, commencing a political existence with the principles of perfect equality, and to mark the growth and increase of difficulties which gradually and necessarily led them to the abandonment of their pure democracy, to the delegation of part of their powers, and to the institution of a representative government. They must have adopted some general rules for their government at a very early period. This is fairly to be inferred from the following agreement entered into by "the second comers." It is copied from the first book of the records of the town. It is there without date. When the early records of the town were copied, the transcriber added to his copy the date of August 20, 1637, from the inside of the cover of the same book. This date evidently refers to another matter which follows it, and is in a different hand writing from the agreement itself. The precise time when any



of these signers removed to Providence cannot be ascertained. Richard Scott, who is the first, left Massachusetts before March 1633. Two of the others, Thomas Angell and Francis Wickes, came with Mr. Williams. The tradition is, that they were then minors, and that that was the reason they were not named in Mr. Williams' deed. They probably signed this agreement as soon as they became of age.

"We whose names are hereunder, desirous to inhabit in the town of Providence, do promise to subject ourselves in active or passive obedience, to all such orders or agreements as shall be made for public good of the body, in an orderly way, by the major assent of the present inhabitants, masters of families, incorporated together into a town-fellowship, and such others whom they shall admit unto them, only in civil things.

RICHARD SCOTT,	THOMAS + ANGELL,
WILLIAM + REYNOLDS,	THOMAS + HARRIS,
JOHN + FIELD,	FRANCIS + WICKES,
CHAD BROWN,	BENEDICT ARNOLD,
JOHN WARNER,	JOSHUA WINSOR,
GEORGE RICKARD,	WILLIAM WICKENDEN."
EDWARD COPE,	

It is worthy of remark, that the signers of this instrument, submit "only in civil things." That there existed some kind of an agreement between the first settlers "masters of families" is apparent from the terms of these articles. They are referred to as a town, as "incorporated together into a town fellowship." And, it is equally certain that the first agreement, whether in writing or not, provided for obedience "in civil things only," otherwise this would not have been so guarded. The testimony of Gov-



ernor Winthrop is in point here, as before quoted in relation to Verin's case. He says, "at their first coming thither, Mr. Williams and the rest did make an order that no man should be molested for his conscience." Here then was established a christian community based upon the great principles of perfect religious liberty, as contended for by Mr. Williams both at Salem and at Plymouth.

The first delegation of power, the first remove they made from pure democracy, was in 1640. The colonists had undoubtedly experienced the difficulties attendant on this form of civil government. They found it not only onerous to individuals, but wanting in that energy necessary to preserve the peace and ensure the prosperity of a growing community. The change adopted is found embodied in the following report.

Providence the 27th day of the 5th mo. in the year, so called, 1640. We Robert Cole, Chad Brown, William Harris and John Warner, being freely chosen by the consent of our loving friends and neighbors, the inhabitants of this town of Providence, having many differences amongst us, they being freely willing and also bound themselves to stand to our arbitration in all differences amongst us, to rest contented in our determination, being so betruſted, we have seriously and carefully endeavored to weigh and consider all these differences, being desirous to bring them to unity and peace, although our abilities are far short in the due examination of such weighty matters, yet so far as we can conceive in laying all things together, we have gone the fairest and equallest way to produce our peace.

1. Agreed. We have with one consent agreed, that in the parting those particular properties which some of our friends and neighbors have in Pawtuxet, from the general common of our town of Providence, to run upon a straight line from a fresh spring, being in the gully at the head of the cove running by



that point of land called Saxefrax, into the town of Mashapaug, to an oak tree standing near unto the cornfield, being at this time the nearest cornfield unto Pawtuxet, the oak tree having four marks with an axe, till some other land-mark be set for a certain bound. Also, we agree, that if any meadow ground lying and joining to that meadow that borders upon the river of Pawtuxet, come within the aforesaid line, which will not come within a straight line from Long Cove to the marked tree, then for that meadow to belong to Pawtuxet, and so beyond the town of Mashapaug from the oak tree between the two fresh rivers Pawtuxet and Wanasquatucket, of an even distance.

2. Agreed. We have with one consent agreed, that for the disposing those lands that shall be disposed, belonging to this town of Providence, to be in the whole inhabitants by the choice of five men for general disposal, to be betruſted with diſpoſal of lands and alſo of the town's ſtock and all general things, and not to receive in any in ſix days, as townſmen, but firſt to give the inhabitants notice, to conſider if any have juſt cauſe to ſhow againſt the receiving of him, as you can apprehend, and to receive none but ſuch as ſubſcribe to this our determination. Alſo we agree, that if any of our neighbors do apprehend himſelf wronged by theſe or any of theſe five diſpoſers, that at the general town meeting he may have a trial.

Alſo, we agree for the town to chooſe beſide the other five men, one to keep record of all things belonging to the town and lying in common.

We agree, as formerly hath been the liberties of the town, ſo ſtill to hold forth, liberty of conſcience.

3. Agreed, that after many conſiderations and conſultations of our own ſtate and alſo of ſtates abroad in way of government, we apprehend no way ſo ſuitable to our condition, as government by way of arbitration. But if men agree themſelves by arbitration, no ſtate we know of, diſallows of that, neither do we. But if men reſuſe that which is but common humanity between man and man, then to compel ſuch unreaſonable perſons to a reaſonable way, we agree, that the five diſpoſers ſhall have power to compel him either to chooſe two men himſelf, or if he



refuse, for them to choose two men, to arbitrate his cause, and if these four men chosen by each party, do end the cause, then to see their determination performed and the faultive to pay the arbitrators for their time spent in it. But if these four men do not end it, then for the five disposers to choose three men to put an end to it. And for the certainty hereof, we agree the major part of the five disposers to choose the three men, and the major part of the three men to end the cause, having power from the five disposers, by a note under their hand to perform it, and the faultive not agreeing in the first, to pay the charge of the last, and for the arbitrators to follow no employment until the cause be ended, without consent of the whole that have to do with the cause. Instance. In the first arbitration, the offender may offer reasonable terms of peace; and the offended may exact upon him, and refuse and trouble men beyond reasonable satisfaction, so for the last arbitrators to judge where the fault was, in not agreeing in the first, to pay the charge in the last.

4. Agreed, that if any person damnify any man either in goods or good name, and the person offended follow not the cause upon the offender, that if any person give notice to the five disposers, they shall call the party delinquent to answer by arbitration.

Instance. Thus, if any person abuse another in person or goods, may be for peace's sake, a man will, for the present, put it up, and it may be so, resolve to revenge; therefore for the peace of the state, the disposers are to look to it in the first place.

5. Agreed for all the whole inhabitants to combine ourselves to assist any man in the pursuit of any party delinquent, with all our best endeavors to attach him; but if any man raise a hubbub, and there be no just cause, then for the party that raised the hubbub to satisfy men for their time lost in it.

6. Agreed, that if any man have a difference with any of the five disposers, which cannot be deferred till general meeting of the town, he may have the clerk call the town together, at his occasioned time, for a trial.

Instance, it may be a man may be to depart the land, or to a far part of the land, or his estate may lie upon a speedy trial or the like case may fall out.

7. Agreed, that the town by five men shall give every man a



deed of all his lands lying within the bounds of the plantation to hold it by for after ages.

8. Agreed, that the five disposers shall, from the date hereof, meet every month day upon general things, and at the quarter day to yield to a new choice and give up their old accounts.

9. Agreed, that the clerk shall call the five disposers together at the month day and the general town together every quarter, to meet upon general occasions, from the date hereof.

10. Agreed, that the clerk is to receive for every cause that comes to the town for a trial 4d, for making each deed 12d, and to give up the book to the town at the year's end and yield to a new choice.

11. Agreed, that all acts of disposal on both sides to stand, since the difference.

12. Agreed, that every man who hath not paid in his purchase money for his plantation shall make up his 10s. to be 30s., equal with the first purchasers, and for all that are received as townsmen hereafter to pay the like sum of money to the town stock.

These being those things we have generally concluded on for our peace, we desiring our loving friends to receive as our absolute determination, laying ourselves down as subject to it. Witness our hands.

Chad Brown,  
Robert Cole,  
William Harris,  
John Throckmorton,  
Stukely Westcott,  
Benedict Arnold,  
William Carpenter,  
Richard Scott,  
Thomas Harris,  
Francis + Wickes,  
Thomas + Angell,  
Adam + Goodwin,  
William + Burrows,  
Roger Williams,  
Robert West,  
Joshua Winsor,  
Robert Williams,  
Matthew Waller,  
Gregory Dexter,  
John + Lippitt,

John Warner,  
John Field,  
William Arnold,  
William Field,  
Edward Cope,  
Edward + Manton,  
William Man,  
Nicholas Power,  
William + Reynolds,  
Thomas Olney,  
Richard Waterman,  
William Wickenden,  
Edward Hart,  
Hugh Bewit,  
Thomas + Hopkins,  
Joan Tiler,  
Jane + Sears,  
Christopher Unthank,  
William + Hawkins.



The foregoing is copied from a copy in the files of the city clerk's office, dated March 23, 1662. It is certified by Thomas Olney, town clerk, to be a true copy "as it standeth upon record in our town book." The records in their present mutilated state, do not contain this document or any reference to the appointment or report of the committee by whom it was drawn up. A copy of it may be found in Hazard's Historical Collections, there said to be taken from the Suffolk records. The signers' names are there omitted. Nor are the names of all the first settlers and received purchasers, appended to Olney's copy, and whether they were or were not to the original, cannot be ascertained, as that original is not in existence. So far as can be traced from the records, it went into immediate operation, and constituted the Town Government for several years. From a perusal of this document, it is quite evident, that there existed in this little community, a great distrust and jealousy of delegated power. Experience had forced them to have recourse to it, and they endeavored to provide against its abuse, by the frequency both of the general meetings of the whole body, and of the elections of their officers. Though but a small remove from the perfect democracy of their first organized government, still it forms an epoch in the history of the Town. It marks the growth of the colony, and an increase of population that required a more energetic and less onerous form of government than was sufficient for an infant colony, while the change shows the same love of equality and lib-



erty, and the same regard to the rights of individuals as was manifested in the former.

The new system, by its weakness and lack of energy, gave rise to difficulties, which, to some of the inhabitants seemed inherent and insurmountable. The great liberty which all enjoyed was abused by some to licentiousness. From the denial of the right of government to interfere in matters of conscience, some claimed the right to do with impunity whatsoever, they said, conscience dictated. Others were at the time accused of denying all power in magistrates. Persons in the neighboring colonies who had adopted such opinions as these, could ill brook the restraints there imposed on them by laws. They would seek and did seek a refuge in Providence, and here they found, that although there was no law-religion, there was still law, though weak and inefficient. Any attempt to enforce it, was attended with danger even to the existence of the plantation itself. Influenced by fear of utter destruction to the settlement, on the 17th November 1641, thirteen of the colonists wrote a letter to the Government of Massachusetts, praying them "of gentle courtesy and for the preservation of humanity and mankind" to consider their condition and to lend them "a neighbor-like helping hand," to enforce the execution of an award made by "eight men, orderly chosen," against one of the inhabitants, in a civil matter. The writers were informed by the Government of Massachusetts that "except they did submit themselves to some jurisdiction, either Plymouth or ours, we had no calling or warrant to interpose in their contentions."



The letter and the reply to it may be found in the Second Volume of the collections of the Rhode-Island Historical Society. How such a subjection could have extended the jurisdiction of that corporation beyond the bounds set in their charter, it is difficult to conceive, and it is not easy to imagine how any of the inhabitants of Providence, could accede to the terms proposed. Yet within a year, William Arnold, William Carpenter, Robert Cole, and Benedict Arnold, subjected themselves and lands to the jurisdiction of Massachusetts. The three first named, were among the original purchasers of Providence. The fourth, Benedict Arnold, was son of William Arnold. They all at this time resided at Pawtuxet. William Arnold was appointed "to keep the peace." The reasons assigned by Governor Winthrop for assuming jurisdiction over these persons and lands, so far beyond their charter limits, were "partly to rescue these men from violence, and partly to draw in the rest in those parts, either under ourselves or Plymouth."

Whatever were the motives of these persons in preferring their petition to Massachusetts, or of Massachusetts in granting it and assuming jurisdiction over them, the effects were highly injurious to Providence. The new subjects of Massachusetts being bound to obey the laws of that colony, held themselves discharged, of course, from every obligation of obedience to the laws of the community in which they dwelt. The peculiar circumstances in which they had placed themselves, would produce difficulties and dissensions between them and their



neighbors; and these, again, would be aggravated by the conflicting jurisdiction of the colonies. If the new subjects of Massachusetts were bound to obey the laws of that colony, they were entitled to protection from that colony. This could be afforded only in the courts and according to the laws of that colony. The consequence would be, that some of the colonists at Providence might be compelled to appear in those courts, although banished from their jurisdiction. That such was the case appears from the following letter.

“ Massachusetts, to our neighbors of Providence.

Whereas William Arnold of Pawtuxet, and Robert Cole and others, have lately put themselves and their families, lands and estates, under the protection and government of this jurisdiction, and have since complained to us that you have since (upon pretence of a late purchase from the Indians) gone about to deprive them of their lawful interest confirmed by four years' possession, and otherwise to molest them; we thought good, therefore, to write to you on their behalf to give you notice, that they and their lands, &c. being under our jurisdiction, we are to maintain them in their lawful rights. If, therefore, you have any just title to any thing you possess, you may proceed against them in our court, where you shall have equal justice; but if you shall proceed to any violence, you must not blame us, if we shall take a like course to right them.

JOHN WINTHROP, Governor.

THOMAS DUDLEY,

RI. BELLINGHAM,

INCR. NEWELL.

The 28 of the 8 mo. 1642.”

That the writers of this letter were not sincere in supposing that their neighbors of Providence would have equal justice in their courts, is not to be pre-



sumed. The settlers at Providence ought to be excused, if they preferred their own course of arbitration, to the courts that had, before, sentenced them to severe punishments for errors in judgment and heretical opinions. Samuel Gorton supposed that this letter referred to himself and to those who had adopted his religious opinions. To avoid the consequences of it, and at the same time to free the inhabitants of Providence from further vexation on their account, they in January 1643, purchased a tract of land of the Indians, lying to the south of Pawtuxet, where they commenced the settlement of Shawomet, in the town of Warwick. Their troubles did not end with their removal. They were driven from their new homes and compelled to appear in the courts of Massachusetts, and there answer to new allegations. Mr. Gorton has told his own story, in a narrative published by him in 1645, and since re-published by the Rhode-Island Historical Society.

Those who subjected themselves to Massachusetts remained under that government till 1658, (except Benedict Arnold, who removed to Newport,) when, on their own petition, they were dismissed and reunited to Providence. Such a state of things was highly inauspicious to the welfare of any community, and much more so, to one just starting into existence. The wonder is, that the settlement had not been entirely broken up, or that the majority had not taken refuge under the protecting hand of Massachusetts, and united the colony with that government.

Soon after the banishment of Mr. Williams from



Massachusetts other sectaries arose to disturb the peace of the churches. The synod which convened in August 1637, found eighty-two erroneous opinions held in that colony. They banished the Rev. John Wheelwright, and Mrs. Ann Hutchinson, the principal leaders of the schismatics, and subsequently disarmed a large number of persons holding heterodox opinions. A part of these, with the aid and assistance of Mr. Williams, purchased the Island of Rhode-Island of the Narragansetts, and commenced a settlement there in March 1638. The deed bears date the same day with the deed of Providence. They entered into articles of association, which were signed at Providence on the 7th day of March 1638. Their first settlement was near the north end of the island, within the present town of Portsmouth.

In May 1643, the colonies of Plymouth, Massachusetts, Hartford and New-Haven, formed a confederacy for mutual protection and support. Two commissioners were annually appointed by each colony to meet and deliberate upon all matters of common interest. The immediate cause of the confederacy was the prospect, in 1642, of a general war with the Indian tribes. Neither of the colonies within the State of Rhode-Island, was invited to join this confederacy at its formation, and all subsequent applications for admission into it were uniformly refused, except upon the condition that they would subject themselves either to Plymouth or Massachusetts. This condition was, of course, rejected. The leading men in each of the colonies of Providence,



Rhode-Island and Shawomet, were obnoxious to the laws of Plymouth and Massachusetts, on account of their religious creeds. Had such a subjection been acceded to, the great object of these settlements must have been abandoned. The religious standard of orthodoxy, must have been re-established over them, and the rights of conscience, surrendered. Neither of these colonies was willing to secure immunity from present danger by such a sacrifice. Their situation was consequently very precarious. In case of a war with the Indians, they had no means of obtaining necessary munitions, except from the other colonies, or from the Dutch at New-York, none of which might be willing to supply them. Besides this, each of these colonies was still in its infancy, and the population small. They were entirely independent of each other. They had nothing to unite them but the sense of common danger and the recollection of common sufferings, in the same cause; and above all, neither of them had any authority from the mother country to justify their proceedings as a corporation. The whole force of their several governments rested in the consent of the individuals who composed each colony. Urged by these, as well as other reasons, the colony at Rhode-Island, in September 1642, resolved to send an agent to England, to procure a charter of incorporation. That the colony at Providence came to the same resolution seems proved by the fact, that Mr. Williams was selected for the agent, and that the charter, when obtained, embraced as well Providence as the towns on the island, under the name of "The



incorporation of Providence Plantations, in the Narragansett Bay, in New-England." There is nothing in the records of Providence relative to this appointment, but it must be recollected, that the records were much mutilated and defaced at the time the town was burnt by the Indians, in 1676. Owing to this circumstance, there are no records of the proceedings of Providence, until 1650, except such as are hereinbefore copied or referred to. Mr. Williams embarked from New-York for England in June or July 1643, in pursuance of this appointment.

The year 1643, is marked with one of the most atrocious of all the cruel and unjustifiable deeds which constitute Indian history. Miantonomi, one of the chief sachems of the Narragansetts, was taken prisoner by Uncas, sachem of the Mohegans, in a battle between the two tribes. Uncas doubted whether he should take his life, and finally delivered the illustrious captive into the hands of the English at Hartford. The matter was laid before the commissioners of the United Colonies at Boston. After due consideration, they resolved, unanimously, that "it would not be safe to set him at liberty, neither had we sufficient ground for us to put him to death." In this dilemma they consulted "five of the most judicious elders" who gave it as their opinion, that he deserved to die. This resolved all the doubts of the commissioners and they then agreed that the commissioners from Hartford, on their return, should inform Uncas of their determination, "that Miantonomi should be delivered to him again, and he should put him to death, so soon as he came within his own



jurisdiction, and that two English should go along with him to see the execution, and if any Indians should invade him for it, we would send men to defend him: if Uncas should refuse to do it, then Miantonomi should be sent in a pinnace to Boston, there to be kept until further consideration." What a comment on the proceedings of the commissioners is the last clause of the above extract, implying as it does, a doubt whether Uncas, an uncultivated savage, protected by all the power of the United Colonies, would execute the sentence pronounced by his Christian allies. Uncas was a fit instrument for such a purpose. He resumed the custody of Miantonomi, carried him to Sachem plain, and there, in cold blood, murdered him, in the presence of the English deputed by the commissioners to be witnesses of the execution. In justification of this deed, several reasons are given by Governor Winthrop. The first was that "there was a general conspiracy among the Indians to cut off all the English, and that Miantonomi was the head and contriver of it." If duly convicted of this, the English should have punished him, as the crime was against them and them alone. The advice of the elders would not have been necessary to convince them of their right and duty to do so. If the whole evidence against him rested in the bare suspicion of the English that he meditated such a conspiracy, the commissioners judged right that "it would not be safe to set him at liberty" nor should the advice of all the elders in New-England have convinced them, that they had sufficient ground to put him to death. Again, it was urged, that he kill-



ed the Pequod who shot at Uncas, instead of sending him to Uncas as he promised, and that he beat an Indian belonging to Pomham, who had subjected himself to Massachusetts, and then bade him complain to Massachusetts. The first of these reasons concerned Uncas, and not the English, and all of them taken together are quite insufficient to justify the proceedings of the commissioners. The remaining reason given by Governor Winthrop was, that Miantonomi "was of a proud and turbulent spirit, and would never be at rest." He was a sovereign prince over a powerful nation. His government extended over a wide extent of territory. When the English received the Wampanoags under their protection, and broke the feudal ties that bound the sachems of Pawtuxet to him as their liege lord, Miantonomi bore the insult and the injury in silence. The blood of an Englishman had never stained the weapons of the Narragansetts. Their covenants of peace and amity were fulfilled to the letter. They joined the English in their war with the Pequods, and aided in the extermination of that race. They could calmly recount the instances in which the English had failed to perform their engagements with them. Herein there was not either pride or turbulence, injurious to the whites. Within the limits of his own kingdom, Miantonomi neither sought for nor followed the advice or dictation of the magistrates or ministers of any English colony. He dispensed his royal bounty with a munificent hand, to those who sought shelter and protection from him. He received within his dominions those that were banished from the



English colonies, without stopping to inquire into their religious creeds. The wanderer and the out-cast, though a christian, was comforted and cherished and relieved by this pagan savage. His open arms offered a shelter to Mr. Williams and the first settlers of Providence, when their brethren closed their hearts against them. To the first settlers of Rhode-Island, he sold the Eden of America, for their resting place from the storms of religious persecution. And last of all, when the arch heretic Samuel Gorton had no place left him where he could enjoy the mysticisms in which he veiled his religious belief, this kind hearted Sachem gave to him and his companions, Shawomet, for a home. Here is the evidence of his pride and turbulence, and "he would never be at rest" in performing such acts of kindness and benevolence. The armor that Gorton gave him, which he wore in his disastrous conflict with Uncas, might have saved his life from the weapons of his cruel foe. Might it not, also, have influenced the commissioners and elders against him? The descendants of the first settlers of Providence, Rhode-Island, and Warwick, should ever remember the obligations that their ancestors were under to Miantonomi. They should cherish his memory in their grateful recollections. When there was no eye to pity, and no power to save in the civilized world, Miantonomi was their friend, their protector, their generous benefactor. And he who reads the lame apologies that his contemporaries offered, and the lamer excuses which later historians have conjured up, for requiring his life, the life of an ally, a prince bound to the En-



glish in a treaty offensive and defensive, will be led to believe, that it was this friendship, this protection, this beneficence, that cost him his life.

Before Mr. Williams arrived in England, a civil war was shaking the government of that kingdom to its centre. Each party had levied troops in the name of the King, for the support of the constitution. The king had been driven from London, and the Parliament reigned lord of the ascendant there, though the final issue of this conflict was as yet doubtful. In November 1643, the parliament committed the care and government of the Colonies to certain members of their own body. The Earl of Warwick was appointed Governor in chief and Lord High Admiral of the Colonies, and chairman of this committee. From this committee Mr. Williams obtained a charter of civil incorporation, bearing date the 17th day of March 1644. The towns of Providence, Portsmouth, and Newport, were united in this charter in a body corporate under the name of "The Incorporation of Providence Plantations in the Narragansett Bay in New-England." Full power was conferred on them "to rule themselves and such others as shall hereafter inhabit within any part of the said tract of land, by such a form of civil government, as by voluntary consent of all or the greatest part of them shall be found most servicable in their estates and condition ; and, to that end, to make and ordain such civil laws and constitutions, and to inflict such punishments upon transgressors, and for execution thereof so to place and displace officers of justice as they or the greatest part of them shall by free consent agree unto. Provided, neverthe-



less, that the said laws, constitutions and punishments for the civil government of the said plantations, be conformable to the laws of England, so far as the nature and constitution of that place will admit."

The powers conferred by this charter, are exceedingly ample. No form of Government is prescribed, and the choice of every officer is left to the inhabitants. In strict conformity too with the leading principle of the settlements, it refers only to civil government. The inhabitants are empowered to make "civil laws" for their "civil government." The colonists had always contended that their right to perfect religious liberty did not result from human laws. They could not therefore have accepted a grant of this from any human power, as that would be acknowledging a right to withhold the grant and to control the exercise of religious freedom.

Mr. Williams was bearer of this charter to America. He arrived with it in Boston, September 17th, 1644. A letter which he brought from some of the leading members of Parliament, to the Governor of Massachusetts, enabled him to land there unmolested, notwithstanding the previous proceedings there against him. On his arrival on the banks of the Seekonk, he was met by the inhabitants of Providence in fourteen canoes. It must be left to imagination to portray the feelings elicited on that auspicious occasion. Undoubtedly the mind of Mr. Williams reverted to the time when he first crossed the same river—with only five associates—in a single canoe—when every stroke of the paddle removed them further and further from every vestige



of civilization. Before him, on that occasion, was a wide wilderness filled with savages, behind him his friends and countrymen, from whose fiery religious zeal he had been obliged to flee, with nothing to solace him but a quiet conscience, and a firm reliance on his God. As he recalled the succeeding events and met his friends assembled to hail his return, their eyes glistening with tears of joy, how his heart must have swelled with gratitude to that God who had thus rewarded his pious confidence. There were around him now his old, tried friends. Together they had buffeted misfortune, and borne the taunts of the neighboring colonies. By the charter which he now brought, they had become the equals of those colonies in rights and powers, though not in numbers or wealth. This was to them the assurance of a legal existence, dependent alone, on the mother country. It was also a guaranty for the protection of that mother country. No wonder then that their hearts beat high with joy and hope, and that the woods resounded with their loud acclamations. He who could remain unmoved under such circumstances must be far above or far below a man.



## CHAPTER SECOND.

### GENERAL HISTORY.

FROM THE ARRIVAL OF THE COLONY CHARTER, IN 1644, TO THE  
ADOPTION OF THE SECOND COLONY CHARTER, IN 1663.

Although the colony charter of 1644 arrived in this country in the autumn of the same year, the government was not organized under it till May 1647. We are left to conjecture as to the causes of this delay. It embraced, it will be recollected, the towns of Providence, Portsmouth, and Newport, by name. The previous entire independency of these towns may have presented some obstacles, and these may have been increased by local and personal jealousies. The charter prescribed no form of government; neither did it point out any way by which the inhabitants of the several towns should be called upon to meet and consider what form should be adopted. These might have produced some delay at first. Afterward, in 1645, the General court of Massachusetts sent a letter to Mr. Williams informing him that they "had received lately out of England, a charter from the high court of Parliament, bearing date, 10 Dec. 1643, whereby the Narragansett Bay and a certain tract of land, wherein Providence and the Island of Aquidney are included, which we thought fit to give you and our countrymen, in those parts, notice of,



that you may forbear to exercise any jurisdiction therein, otherwise to appear at our next General Court" "to show by what right you claim any such jurisdiction." It is remarkable that the historians of Massachusetts are silent respecting this charter. The only known evidence of its existence, is the records of that state. From a copy made from them, the foregoing extracts were made. Although Massachusetts never exercised any jurisdiction under it, yet the assertion of a right to do so, would, in itself, be no small obstacle to the establishment of a settled government under the other charter. The colonists might also have hesitated to exercise any authority under a charter emanating from the Parliament. There is indubitable evidence that they were divided into parties, like the mother country, some taking part with the king, while others were in favor of the Parliament. So long as it remained uncertain which party would succeed in this contest, it would not be strange, that the inhabitants should not agree to act under the authority of those who in one event might be adjudged traitors. These may be some of the reasons why a charter government was not sooner organized in the colony.

This unsettled state of public affairs, though it may have retarded, did not entirely stop, the growth of Providence. The utmost freedom in religious matters which existed here, must have attracted from the other colonies, those who were there in danger of civil penalties, for the heterodoxy of their opinions. This alone would have increased their numbers considerably. Dr. Holmes, in his "American Annals,"



states, that in 1645, there were in Providence one hundred and one men capable of bearing arms. It is probable that the colony at Shawomet or Warwick was included. If Providence contained one half of that number, it was a very great increase, considering its situation and the circumstances under which it originated, and through which it had had to pass.

Besides those who, in the words of the original deed, were admitted to "equal fellowship of vote" with the first purchasers, other individuals were received as townsmen, having no interest in the lands, and some too, as twenty-five acre or quarter-right purchasers. The latter class in every division of land, received one quarter part as much as a full purchaser. The whole number of purchasers of both kinds never exceeded one hundred and one persons. They were admitted such, at various times and on various terms, but it cannot be ascertained when the last of that number was admitted. Some individuals were received as inhabitants on the conditions contained in the following agreement.

"The 19th of 11 mo. 1645. (January 19, 1646.)

We whose names are hereafter subscribed, having obtained a free grant of Twenty-five acres of land, apiece, with the right of commoning according to the said proportion of lands, from the free inhabitants of this town of Providence, do thankfully accept of the same, and do hereby promise to yield

[\*The state of active or passive obedience to the authority of England.]

[King and Parliament\*] established in this colony, according to our charter, and to all such wholesome laws and orders, that are or shall be made by the major consent of the Town of Providence, as also, not to claim any right to the purchase of the said plantations, nor any privilege of vote in town



affairs, until we shall be received as freemen of the said town of Providence.

John Brown,	John + Clawson,
Pardon Tillinghast,	Thomas + Sucklin,
John + Jones,	Benjamin + Herendeen,
Thomas + Clemence,	Edward Inman,
William Fenner,	Henry Reddock,
George Sheppard,	Samuel Bennett,
Robert + Potter,	Edward Smith,
Robert Pyke,	John Fenner,
Mathurin Bellou,	John Sayles,
Thomas + Walwin,	Stephen Northup,
Lawrence + Wilkinson,	Daniel Brown,
Daniel + Comstock,	Epenetus Olney,
Benjamin + Smith,	John Steere,
John Smith,	George Way."

The appearance of the signatures to the original document indicates that they were not made at the same time. The alteration in the agreement itself, as noted in the margin of it, was undoubtedly made after the establishment of the Commonwealth of England.

In May 1647, the obstructions to the organization of the Government of the colony of Providence Plantations, under the charter, were so far removed that a meeting of a committee from each of the towns of Providence, Portsmouth, Newport and Warwick, was agreed upon, to be holden at Portsmouth on the 18th of the month. A town meeting for the choice of the committee of Providence, took place on the 16th. The following instructions were given to their committee by the town.

"To our loving and well betruſted friends and neighbors, Gregory Dexter, William Wickenden, Thomas Olney, Robert Williams, Richard Waterman, Roger Williams, William Field, John Greene, John Smith, John Lippitt.



We the greater part of the inhabitants of this plantation of Providence, having orderly chosen you, at our Town Meeting this 16th of the 3d mo. 1647, to appear for us, at the General Court of this colony, to be held at Portsmouth on Rhode-Island, upon the 18th of this instant month, desiring the Lord's Providence for your safe arrival there; we all voluntarily assenting, do hereby give you full power and authority as followeth:

First, to act and vote for us respectively or otherwise, as if we ourselves were in person, for the settling of this General Court for the present, and for the composing of it, into any figure for the future, as cause shall require.

Secondly, to act and vote for us, as aforesaid, in the choice of all general officers, as need shall require.

Thirdly, if the General Court shall consist of but ten men for each town, then you are to act accordingly for this town; and if the General Court shall be reduced into a fewer number, which, for divers considerations, may be for the best, then, we give you full power to choose from among yourselves, such a number of our loving neighbors as shall answer the same figure, unto whom, being orderly chosen by you, we do give you power to transfer this our commission, giving of them full power to act and vote for us the inhabitants of this plantation, in all general affairs, and for the settling of the island in peace and union, and for all matters that shall concern this particular town, desiring a careful respect unto these ensuing instructions. But if the Court shall consist of ten of each town, then our desires are that this our commission, with the ensuing instructions, may remain entire in your hands.

First. That we may have a true copy of our charter assigned unto us by the General Court for the use of our plantation.

Secondly. We do voluntarily, and are freely willing, to receive and be governed by the laws of England, together with the way of administration of them, so far as the nature and constitution of this place will admit, desiring, so far as may be, to hold a correspondency with the whole colony in that model that hath been lately shown unto us by our worthy friends of the Island, if the General Court shall complete and confirm the same, or any



other model as the General Court shall agree upon according to our charter.

Thirdly. We desire to have full power and authority, to transact all our home affairs, to try all manner of causes or cases, and to execute all manner of executions, entirely within ourselves, excepting such cases and executions as the colony shall be pleased to reserve to general trials and executions.

Fourthly. We desire to have full power and authority to choose, ordain, authorise, and confirm, all our particular town officers, and also, that the said officers shall be responsible unto our particular town, and that there may be no intermixture of general and particular officers, but that all may know their bounds and limits.

Fifthly. We desire to have an exact and orderly way open for appeals unto General Courts, that so, if any shall be justly grieved, at any sentence passed, or otherwise, he or they may make their lawful charge for relief there.

Lastly. Whereas, it was hinted in that which our worthy friends [sent] unto us, that each town should have a charter of civil incorporation, apart, for the transaction of particular affairs, if the Court shall proceed so far as to agitate and order the same, then, we give you full power, on our behalf, to move and procure any thing beside these instructions, that in your wisdom you may conceive may tend unto the general peace or union of the colony and our own particular liberties and privileges, provided you do all, or the most of you, unanimously agree therein, and always reserving our equal votes, and equal privileges in the general.

Thus betrusting you with the premises, we commit you unto the protection and direction of the Almighty, wishing you a comfortable voyage, a happy success, and a safe return unto us again.

Your thankful friends and neighbors,

ROGER WILLIAMS, Moderator.

The allusions to the difficulties and dangers of a "voyage" to Portsmouth, almost provoke a smile. Accustomed to the modern facilities of travel, it is not easy to conceive that they have not always ex-



isted, or that such a journey ever involved either difficulty or danger of sufficient magnitude to be named in town meeting. Probably this voyage was made in canoes, and the committee worked their passage at the paddles. Nearly twenty years after this, Mr. Williams went in his canoe to Newport, and by "rowing all day," arrived at his journey's end towards midnight.

Notwithstanding the appointment of this committee, it is probable that the greater part of the inhabitants of Providence, Portsmouth, Newport and Warwick attended this meeting. It was in truth a General Assembly of the people. Mr. John Coggeshall of Newport was chosen moderator. After resolving that a major part of the colony was present, and that they therefore had power to act under the charter, they agreed to adopt the charter by subscribing an "engagement" to it. A grant of £100 was made to Mr. Williams for his services and expenses in procuring it, to be paid, £20 by Providence, £30 by Portsmouth, and £50 by Newport. They appointed a General Assembly of the whole colony to be holden annually, "if wind and weather hinder not," on the Tuesday after the 15th of May, at which the General Officers of the colony were to be chosen. These were, a President, one Assistant for each town, a General Recorder, a Public Treasurer, and a General Sergeant; afterwards a General Attorney and a General Solicitor, were added. Such of the colony as could not attend the General Assembly, had the right to send their votes for these officers, by some other persons; hence the origin of the terms prox,



and proxy votes, as applied to the present mode of voting for state officers in Rhode-Island. Each town had the nomination of one person for each of the offices of President, Recorder, Treasurer and Sergeant, and of two persons for each Assistant, from which the election was to be made.

The President and Assistants, composed the General Court of trials. They had jurisdiction over all aggravated offences, and in such matters as should be, by the town courts, referred to them as too weighty for themselves to determine, and also, of all disputes between different towns, or between citizens of different towns and strangers. They had two sessions in each year. All questions of fact, were determined by a jury of twelve men. The town courts had exclusive original jurisdiction over all causes between their own citizens. The President was Conservator of the Peace throughout the colony, and the Assistants, in their respective towns. All legislative power was ultimately in the people, in General Assembly. Questions of general interest, and laws affecting the whole colony, were to be debated and decided upon by the town where they originated and then sent to the other towns. The votes in relation to them were collected in each town and sent to the General Court, which was composed of six Commissioners from each town. If upon examining the votes returned, a majority of them were in favor of the law, the General Court were to declare it, and it stood for a law, till the next General Assembly. Such laws might also originate in the General Court. In this case, they were subsequently to be sent to each



town, there to be debated in town meeting, after which, the votes were to be taken and returned to the General Recorder, to be counted in presence of the President. If a major part of the colony were in their favor, they stood for laws, till the next General Assembly. Each town was directed to choose surveyors of highways, "to provide carefully for the relief of the poor, to maintain the impotent and to employ the able," to appoint an overseer, military officers, and a town council to consist of six persons. Each town had the power of licensing taverns and alehouses, and the head officer, that is, the Assistants, took the recognizance of each licensed person with two sureties to maintain good order.

Before the meeting of this General Assembly, a body or code of laws had been drawn up and sent to the several towns, for examination. This was adopted, and it is presumed, was referred to in the instructions given to the committee of Providence, as "the model that hath been lately shown unto us by our worthy friends of the Island." It contains a general description of various crimes and offences, provides for the general administration of justice, for the collection of debts, publication and celebration of marriages, support of the poor by the several towns, and for the probate of wills and the settlement of the estates of deceased persons. It is prefaced with an engagement to the charter to be signed by the inhabitants, after which it is declared "that the form of Government established in Providence Plantations is Democratical, that is to say, a government held by the free and voluntary consent of all or the



greater part of the free inhabitants." The following are extracts from the bill of rights. "That no person in this colony shall be taken or imprisoned or deprived of his lands or liberties or be exiled or in any otherwise molested or destroyed but by the lawful judgment of his peers or by some known law and according to the letter of it, ratified and confirmed by the major part of the General Assembly, lawfully met and orderly managed."

"No person shall, but at his great peril, presume to bear or execute any office, that is not lawfully called to it and confirmed in it; nor, though he be lawfully called and confirmed, presume to do more or less than those that had power to call him, did authorize him to do."

The code contains nothing touching religion, or matters of conscience, thus pursuing the same silent, yet most expressive legislation on the subject, which was commenced in the charter itself. That part of the code relating to offences, ends with the following significant expressions. "These are the laws that concern all men, and these are the penalties for the transgression thereof, which, by common consent are ratified and established throughout the whole colony, and otherwise than thus what is herein forbidden, all men may walk as their consciences persuade them, every one in the fear of his GOD. And let the Saints of the Most High walk in this colony, without molestation, in the name of Jehovah, their GOD, forever and ever."

Such is the general outline of the government established under the charter. That the framers of



that government felt the necessity of carefully guarding all delegated power, appears from all their proceedings. It is also apparent, that the towns, as such, parted with no more power than they deemed the exigency of the case required. They can scarcely be said, to have consented to any thing more than a confederation of independent governments. If they intended a complete consolidation of powers, their acts fall far short of it. He who carefully peruses the whole proceedings of the first General Assembly of the towns in this infant Colony of Providence Plantations, as he will find them recorded, will be struck with the resemblance there is, between those towns, after that assembly had closed its labors, and the several states now composing the United States of America, under the constitution.

The organization of the colony government, did not put an end to the feuds and divisions that had previously disturbed the tranquillity and hindered the growth of Providence. Many were the expedients resorted to, to restore peace and union. The following document is selected, as one of these expedients.

“Considering that great mercy afforded unto us in this liberty to meet together, being denied to many of our countrymen in most parts, especially in our poor native country, deploring their distressed condition, in most sad and bloody calamities; that ingratitude and disacknowledgment of favors received, are just causes for the deprivation of them; together with our home divisions and home conspiracies, the ruination of families, town and country: moreover, the many plots and present endeavors at home and abroad, not only to disturb our peace and liberties,



but utterly to root up both root and branch of this our being ; that government holds forth through love, union and order, although by few in number and mean in condition, yet by experience hath withstood and overcome mighty opposers, and above all, the several and unexpected deliverances of this poor plantation, by that mighty Providence, who is able to deliver us, through love, union and order.

Therefore, being sensible of these great and weighty premises, and now met together to consult about our peace and liberties, whereby our families and posterities may still enjoy these favors, and that we may publicly declare unto all, the free discharge of our consciences and duties, whereby, it may appear upon record, that we are not wilfully opposite nor careless and senseless, and thereby the means of our own and others' ruin and destruction ; and, especially, in testimony of our fidelity and cordial affection unto one another here present, that so there may be a current, peaceable and comfortable proceeding : We do faithfully and unanimously, by this our subscription, promise unto each other to keep unto these ensuing particulars.

First. That the foundation in love may appear among us, what causes of difference have heretofore been given, either by words or misbehavior, in public or private, concerning particular or general affairs, by any of us here present, not to mention or repeat them in this assembly, but that love shall cover the multitude of them in the grave of oblivion.

Secondly. That union may proceed from love, we promise, to keep constant unto those several engagements made by us both unto our town and colony, and that, to the uttermost of our powers and abilities, to maintain our lawful rights and privileges, and to uphold the government of this plantation ; also, that love may appear in union, we desire to abandon all causeless fears and jealousies of one another, self-seekings and strivings one against another, only aiming at the general and particular peace and union of this town and colony.

Lastly. For our more orderly proceeding in this Assembly, whereby peace and union may appear in order, if in our consultations, differences of judgments shall arise, then moderately in order through argumentation to agitate the same, consid-



ering the cause, how far it may be hurtful or conducing unto our union, peace and liberties, and accordingly act, not after the will or person of any, but unto the justice or righteousness of the cause. Again, if in case such causes shall be presented, wherein such difficulties shall appear, that evident arguments cannot be given for present satisfaction, but that either town or colony or both shall suffer, then to take into our consideration, a speech of a beloved friend, Better to suffer an inconvenience than a mischief, better to suspend with a loss which may be inconvenient, than to be totally disunited and bereaved of all rights and liberties, which will be a mischief indeed. Moreover, that offences and disturbances may be prevented, that so the current of business may peaceably proceed in this Assembly, we do faithfully promise to carry ourselves in words and behavior, so moderately and orderly as the cause shall permit, and if in case any of us shall fly out in provoking, scurrilous or exorbitant speeches or unsuitable behavior, that he or they, so doing, shall be publicly declared, branded, and noted upon record, to be a common violator and disturber of the union, peace and liberties of this plantation. Dated December 1647. We do here subscribe, without partiality.

Robert Williams, William Wickenden,  
 Roger Williams, John Field,  
 John Smith, Thomas + Hopkins,  
 Húgh Bewett, William + Hawkins."

No great good could, in general, result from such agreements. The signers did not need them as a restraint upon themselves, and those who were inclined to disturb the public tranquillity could scarcely be expected to give the pledge contained in them. But more than all, every individual was left, as before, not only to decide on his own, but on every other person's acts, whether the same were according to the letter or spirit of them. They might therefore afford new causes of disputes and difficulties and endanger the peace and union they were intended to preserve.



1643.—The General Assembly for Election, met this year in Providence.

WILLIAM CODDINGTON, was elected President.

ROGER WILLIAMS, Assistant for Providence.

WILLIAM BAULSTONE, do. for Portsmouth.

JEREMY CLARK, do. for Newport.

JOHN SMITH, do. for Warwick.

PHILIP SHERMAN, General Recorder.

ALEXANDER PARTRIDGE, General Sergeant.

Further provision was made relative to the General Court of Commissioners. The Assembly required each town to choose "six men in whom the General Court shall continue," and if any towns neglected to choose, the General Court supplied the deficiency by electing commissioners. The first commissioners were chosen by the inhabitants of each town then present in the General Assembly. Those from Providence were

Thomas Olney,	Hugh Bewett,
Thomas Harris,	Robert Williams,
William Wickenden,	Gregory Dexter.

The Assembly required each town to elect their town officers within ten days, and appointed a person in each town, except Providence, to call the town together, for that purpose. It is to be inferred that Providence had made their election, according to an order of the General Assembly passed the preceding year. The president elect was not present at this Assembly. Divers complaints had been made against him, the nature of which does not appear. The Assistant from Newport was authorized to execute the duties of President, in case Mr. Coddington refused



to accept the office or these charges were established. Mr. Coddington did not act as President, but from which of these causes, cannot be ascertained. In September following, Mr. Coddington and Mr. Partridge applied to the Commissioners of the United Colonies for the admission of the Island of Rhode-Island into that confederacy. Their petition was refused, except upon the condition that they would subject themselves to Plymouth. Mr. Coddington inclined to accede to these terms, as did also the town of Portsmouth. The opposition of the other towns in the colony frustrated the design. Whether these proceedings on the part of Mr. Coddington produced the complaints made against him, or whether a suspicion of such an intention on his part was the foundation of the complaints, is left to conjecture.

1649.—A special General Assembly was holden at Warwick, in March; there is no record however of their proceedings. In a letter from Mr. Williams to Mr. John Winthrop, he refers to the proceedings of this court. It seems that he was not present, and that the colony elected him Deputy President, Mr. Coddington having sailed for England with his daughter, in January. The colony was thrown into great excitement, by the report of a discovery of a gold mine on the island. Mr. Williams sent some bags of the ore to Mr. Winthrop, and writes, "it is certainly affirmed to be both gold and silver ore, upon trial." The Assembly passed an act, taking possession of the mine in the name of the State of England, and issued a proclamation forbidding all persons to intermeddle with any of the ore. This was pub-



lished by William Dyre, appointed for that purpose, for want of a Herald at arms, and the arms of England, and of the Lord High Admiral, were set up at the mine. Fortunately, a more accurate examination dissipated the golden dreams of the colonists by proving the report unfounded. At the same session the following charter was granted to the town of Providence.

“Whereas, by virtue of a free and absolute charter of civil incorporation, granted to the free inhabitants of this colony of Providence, by the Right Honorable Robert, Earl of Warwick, Governor in chief with the rest of the Honorable Commoners, bearing date the 17th day of March, Anno 1643, giving and granting full power and authority unto the said inhabitants to govern themselves and such others as shall come among them, as also to make, constitute and ordain such laws, orders and constitutions, and to inflict such punishments and penalties as is conformable to the laws of England, so near as the nature and constitution of the place will admit, and which may best suit the estate and condition thereof, and whereas the said towns of Providence, Portsmouth, Newport and Warwick are far remote each from other, whereby so often and free intercourse of help, in deciding of differences and trying of causes and the like, cannot easily and at all times be had and procured of that kind is requisite; therefore, upon the petition and humble request of the freemen of the Town of Providence, exhibited unto this present session of the General Assembly, wherein they desire freedom and liberty to incorporate themselves into a body politic, and we the said Assembly, having duly weighed and seriously considered the premises, and being willing and ready to provide for the ease and liberty of the people, have thought fit, and by the authority aforesaid, and by these presents, do give, grant and confirm unto the free inhabitants of the town of Providence, a free and absolute charter of civil incorporation and government to be known by the Incorporation of Providence Plantation in the Narragansett Bay, in New-England, together with full power and authority to



govern and rule themselves, and such others as shall hereafter inhabit within any part of the said Plantation, by such a form of civil government, as by voluntary consent of all, or the greater part of them, shall be found most suitable unto their estate and condition; and, to that end, to make and ordain such civil orders and constitutions, to inflict such punishments upon transgressors, and for execution thereof, and of the common statute laws of the colony agreed unto, and the penalties and so many of them as are not annexed already unto the colony court of trials, so to place and displace officers of justice, as they or the greater part of them shall, by one consent, agree unto. Provided, nevertheless, that the said laws, constitutions and punishments, for the civil government of the said plantation, be conformable to the laws of England, so far as the nature and constitution of the place will admit, yet, always reserving to the aforesaid General Assembly power and authority so to dispose the general government of that plantation as it stands in reference to the rest of the plantations, as they shall conceive, from time to time, most conducing to the general good of the said plantations. And we the said Assembly, do further authorise the aforesaid inhabitants to elect and engage such aforesaid officers upon the first second day of June annually. And, moreover, we authorize the said inhabitants, for the better transacting of their public affairs, to make and use a public seal as the known seal of Providence Plantation, in the Narragansett Bay, in New-England.

In testimony whereof, we the said General Assembly, have hereunto set our hands and seals the 14th of March, anno 1648.

JOHN WARNER, Clerk of the Assembly.

This charter was intended to strengthen the municipal government of Providence. To have been more useful, it should have prescribed a form of government to be adopted. There is no reference to this charter in the records of the town, neither a petition for it, nor acceptance of it. There is a copy of it in the city clerk's office, engrossed on parchment, which is now almost illegible. A similar charter,



bearing date the same day, was granted to Warwick ; and it is presumed, Portsmouth and Newport had like charters.

The General Assembly for Election was holden at Warwick

John Smith, of Warwick, was elected President.

Thomas Olney, Assistant for Providence.

John Sandford, do for Portsmouth.

John Clark, do for Newport.

Samuel Gorton, do for Warwick.

Philip Sherman, General Recorder.

John Clark, General Treasurer.

The names of the Commissioners cannot be ascertained, as they are not entered in the record of their proceedings. Each town was required to build a prison within nine months. The town magistrates of the town in which the General Court of trials sat, were declared members of that court. The submission of the inhabitants of Pawtuxet to the Government of Massachusetts, having been brought before this Assembly, a letter was sent them in relation to it. The sale of wines and spirituous liquors to the natives was prohibited under severe penalties.

1650.—The General Assembly for Election was holden this year at Newport. Some difficulty existed in relation to the election, as among the first acts passed, is one declaring that the election shall “stand notwithstanding obstructions.” In addition to the officers heretofore chosen, they, at this time, elected an Attorney General and a Solicitor General. The officers chosen were



Nicholas Easton, President.

William Field, Assistant for Providence.

John Porter, do. for Portsmouth.

John Clark, do. for Newport.

John Wickes, do. for Warwick.

Philip Sherman, General Recorder.

Richard Knight, General Sergeant.

John Clark, General Treasurer.

William Dyre, General Attorney.

Hugh Bewett, General Solicitor.

The commissioners appointed for Providence,  
were

Richard Waterman, Arthur Fenner,

Thomas Hopkins, Thomas Harris,

Hugh Bewett, Gregory Dexter.

The names are not entered in the record of their proceedings. In many instances after this time, where the names are entered in the record, they are not the same with the persons elected by the town. This is accounted for by an act passed this session, "that in case the committee shall fall short of six from each town, that then, they that appear from each town shall have liberty to choose and make up the number." And the whole body also declared, "that if upon complaint and due trial of any member of the General Assembly, he is not found a fit member, that the Assembly have power to suspend him and to choose another in his room." In this last act, the Court of Commissioners assume the title of General Assembly, which before had been applied only to a General Assembly of all the free inhabitants of the colony. Each town was required



to have their guns prepared, and to keep a magazine of arms and ammunition. Providence was required to have in its magazine, one barrel of powder, five hundred pounds of lead, six pikes and six muskets fit for use—Portsmouth, double the quantity of powder, lead and pikes, and eighteen muskets—Newport three barrels of powder, one thousand pounds of lead, twelve pikes and twenty-four muskets, and Warwick the same as Providence. The regulation of the militia was left to each town. It seems that the towns had not complied with the order made by the General Assembly in May 1647, for the payment of Mr. Williams, as a new one was made at this time requiring the towns to make up and pay their several proportions within twenty days.

In May the Town passed an ordinance requiring births to be recorded. This was no better observed in early times than the State law on the same subject, is at present. Mr. Backus states, that a citation was sent from Massachusetts, to some of the inhabitants of Providence, to appear and answer in their courts to some new complaints of William Arnold and William Carpenter. The citation bore date June 20. This explains an entry in the town records, of the appointment of Thomas Olney, Robert Williams and William Wickenden, "to be joined in commission with three chosen out of each town, viz: Portsmouth, Newport and Warwick, to give answer to the State of Massachusetts, about these summons that are sent into the colony, and also order all other necessary occasions depending on that business." This committee was summoned by the President of



the colony to meet at Portsmouth on the 20th of July. One would suppose, that this would have been sufficient cause for calling a special court of commissioners. What was done by this committee, no where appears.

The oldest rate-bill extant, bears date the first of September of this year. The gross amount assessed was £56,5. The largest sum assessed on any individual was £5, on Benedict Arnold. The sum of £3,6,8, was assessed on William Field, Richard Scott, William Harris, William Arnold, and William Carpenter. Roger Williams was assessed £1,13,4.— Among these, it will be seen, were some who had subjected themselves and lands to Massachusetts. Perhaps the town took their subjection into the account to increase their taxes.

A General court of commissioners was holden on the 26th day of October. The commissioners of Providence were

Thomas Angell,

James Ashton,

Nicholas Power,

Thomas Roberts,

William Field,

Hugh Bewett.

There appears in their proceedings no special object for the meeting. By this court it was "ordered that the Representatives court, shall always consist of six discreet, able men, chosen out of each town, for the transacting of the affairs of the commonwealth." They were empowered to pass laws, which were to be sent to each town within six days, there to be considered and canvassed within three days. Those persons who disapproved of the proposed laws were to send their votes to the General Recorder within



ten days, and unless it appeared that a majority of the freemen of the colony disapproved them, they remained in force as enacted by the Representatives. This was a great improvement on the laws of 1647.

At a town meeting on the 9th of November, it was ordered that for the future all persons received shall pay for their home share one shilling per acre, and sixpence per acre for the rest, not exceeding twenty-five acres.

1651.—In February 1651, Mr. Williams wrote to the town of Providence requesting “payment of the money due unto me, about the charter.” It appears from this letter, that neither of the towns had paid the sums assessed for that purpose. In the same letter he also refers to a proposition that had been made to him, to be engaged in the erection of Iron Works, in the town, toward which he wrote that he had promised his help “when the matter was ripe.” At a town meeting in May following an order was passed for paying “the £5 due to Roger Williams, out of the first money coming into the town stock.” There is no record of the election of any Commissioners for the General Assembly, in the town records. Nor is there any record of any General Assembly, for election. It would seem that no election of colony officers took place. This was probably owing to the distracted state of the colony, and perhaps the object of Mr. Coddington’s visit to England had transpired.

This year is the first record of any choice of town officers. The date of the election is lost, but from its place in the record, it was probably on the day



prescribed in the Town charter. The officers were  
Gregory Dexter, Town Clerk.

Robert Williams, }  
Thomas Olney, } Town Deputies.

Thomas Harris, William Wickenden, and Richard Waterman, to be added to the Assistant and two Deputies, to make up the Town Council; Hugh Bewett, Town Sergeant; Thomas Harris, Treasurer. It was also voted that Thomas Harris, William Wickenden and Richard Waterman "shall join in course with the three chief officers, in cases difficult during the year ensuing." "The three chief officers," were probably, the Assistant and the two town deputies. The respective duties of these officers, where not implied in their titles, can be gathered only from other parts of the records. The "Town Deputies" it is supposed, composed the Town Court. They also had the power of laying out land to individual proprietors or purchasers. The Assistant, it will be recollected, was a colony officer, one of the judges of the General Court of trials. There being no choice of colony officers this year, was probably the reason why Thomas Harris, William Wickenden and Richard Waterman were appointed to join with the three chief officers in the execution of certain duties within the town, which duties, by the colony law, devolved on the General Court of trials.

Mr. Coddington returned to this country, sometime in the summer of this year, bringing with him a commission, signed by John Bradshaw, constituting him Governor of the Islands of Rhode-Island and Conanicut during his life. This event completed



the destruction of the colony government under the charter, and one would suppose that this would have entirely broken up the towns of Providence and Warwick, or driven them for protection under the Government of Plymouth or Massachusetts. But the leading men in these towns were not dismayed or disheartened. These settlements having been commenced under most discouraging circumstances, and having been obliged to sustain themselves against the traitorous designs of some of their own citizens and the open hostility of the neighboring colonies, were not now to be relinquished, though other difficulties, apparently insurmountable, were thrown in their way. A General Assembly of the two towns was called in October, at which,

Samuel Gorton was chosen President ;

William Field, Assistant for Providence.

A court of commissioners was appointed to be holden in November, "to consult and determine on what may make for the public good of the colony."

The commissioners from Providence were

Robert Williams,	William Wickenden,
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Thomas Harris,	Thomas Olney,
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Hugh Bewett,	Gregory Dexter.
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They passed the following resolution :

"Whereas it is evident and apparent, that Mr. Nicholas Easton being formerly chosen President of the province of Providence Plantations, hath of late deserted his office, and he, together with the two towns upon Rhode-Island, viz. Portsmouth and Newport have declined and fallen off from that established order of civil government and incorporation amongst us, by means of a commission presented upon the said island by Mr. William Coddington



ton, We, the rest of the towns of the said jurisdiction, are there-upon constrained to declare ourselves, that we do profess ourselves unanimously to stand embodied and incorporated as before, by virtue of our charter granted unto us by that Honorable State of Old England, and, thereby do, according to our legal and settled order, choose and appoint our officers, institute laws according to the constitution of the place and capacity of our present condition, prosecuting, acting and executing all matters and causes for the doing of justice, preservation of our peace, and maintaining of all civil rights between man and man, according to the honorable authority and true intent of our aforesaid charter granted unto us."

The towns of Providence and Warwick appointed Mr. Williams their agent to go to England and solicit a confirmation of their charter privileges. In the mean time, Plymouth and Massachusetts renewed their dispute before the commissioners of the United Colonies about Warwick. In September, Plymouth was advised to take possession of that plantation by force, unless the inhabitants would willingly submit themselves to their jurisdiction. This undoubtedly hastened the appointment of an agent to England. The proceedings of Mr. Coddington were not approved by all the inhabitants of the islands over which he was appointed Governor. Forty-one of the inhabitants of Portsmouth, and sixty-five of the inhabitants of Newport, joined in requesting Dr. John Clark, of Newport, to proceed to England as their agent, and solicit a repeal of his commission. Mr. Williams and Mr. Clark sailed together from Boston, in November. The objects of their respective missions were different. Mr. Clark was the sole agent of the island towns, to procure a repeal of Mr. Coddington's commission. Mr. Williams was the sole



agent of Providence and Warwick, to procure a new charter for these two towns. It seems to have been admitted that the commission of Mr. Coddington had in effect, vacated the previous charter. The following extract of a letter from William Arnold, to the governor of Massachusetts, will show the distracted state of things at that time in the towns on the main.

“From Pawtuxet, this 1st day of the 7th month, 1651.

Much honored.—I thought it my duty to give intelligence unto the much honored court, of that which I now understand is now working here in these parts; so that if it be the will of God, an evil may be prevented, before it come to too great a head, viz. Whereas Mr. Coddington has gotten a charter of Rhode-Island and Conanicut Island to himself, he has thereby broken the force of their charter that went under the name of Providence, because he has gotten away the greater part of the colony.—Now this company of the Gortonists, that lived at Shawomet, and that company of Providence, are gathering of £200 to send Mr. Roger Williams unto the Parliament, to get them a charter of these parts; they of Shawomet have given £100 already, and there be some men of Providence that have given £10 and £20 a man, to help it forward with speed.”

1652.—On the arrival of these agents in England they presented a joint petition to the Council of State, on the 8th of April, by whom it was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs. On the 8th of September, Mr. Williams wrote to Mr. Gregory Dexter, at Providence, of his partial success in the objects of his mission. “It is God’s mercy, his very great mercy that we have obtained this interim encouragement from the Council of State, that you may cheerfully go on in the name of a Colony until



the controversy is determined. The determination of it, Sir, I fear, will be a work of time, for our adversaries threaten to make a last appeal to Parliament, in case we get the day before the Council." Subsequently the Council issued an order, vacating the commission of Mr. Coddington and directing the towns to unite again under the charter. This was brought to Rhode-Island by Mr. William Dyre. The controversy alluded to by Mr. Williams undoubtedly related to the conflicting claims then set up to some parts of the Plantations incorporated under the charter. This was of much longer continuance than even Mr. Williams supposed it would be.

The General Assembly of the two main-land towns was holden at Warwick.

John Smith, was chosen President,  
Thomas Olney, Assistant for Providence,  
Samuel Gorton, " for Warwick,  
John Greene, Junior, General Recorder,  
Randall Holden, Treasurer.

The commissioners from Providence were

Robert Williams, William Wickenden,  
Gregory Dexter, Thomas Harris,  
Richard Waterman, Hugh Bewett.

At a town meeting holden in July, a letter was sent to Warwick, proposing a meeting of Commissioners to prepare "letters of encouragement" in answer to the "divers loving letters from our agent, Mr. Roger Williams, wherein his careful proceedings are manifest." The answer from Warwick is copied at length.



“Neighbors and friends of the town of Providence. Our town having received a letter from your town, dated the 27th of this instant, and having taken into serious consideration the motions therein contained, have thereupon accordingly ordered, that four commissioners, being now chosen by them, shall meet your commissioners at the place and time where Warwick Assistant, supplying the place of President, shall appoint: Furthermore, our town have ordered, that, in case you do the like, that their commissioners with yours, may have liberty, as they shall see cause, to treat, either by word or writing, with the Island, namely Portsmouth and Newport, to see, if there may be an unanimous agreement for the four towns to send over together as desiring the former charter to be renewed, which unanimous agreement may be a means to remove some obstacles; for, first, it may take off a tie upon Mr. Williams, our agent’s mind, who, at present, cannot so freely sue for the whole: secondly, it may be the means to take off some potent men in the Parliament that may obstruct; as also, thirdly, we may the better bring in the Narragansett Bay, which Coweset men so strive for, which, if granted them, will be very prejudicial to us, being we can neither have free egress nor regress by sea. Thus in haste, desiring your welfare, we cease further to trouble you.

By the Town, JOHN GREENE, Jun., Scribe.

Dated at Warwick, the 29th of July, ’52.

Agreeably to the proposals in these letters, a meeting was called by the Deputy President on the 2d of August, but there is no record of its proceedings.

A court of Commissioners met at Providence on the 28th of October. The Commissioners from Providence were

Robert Williams,	Thomas Hopkins,
Richard Waterman,	James Ashton,
Gregory Dexter,	Thomas Harris.

A letter of thanks was sent to Mr. Williams, for



his care and diligence in their affairs, and intimating that if the charter should be renewed by his means, "that it might tend much to the weighing of men's minds and subjecting of persons who have been refractory, to yield themselves over as unto a settled government, if it might be the pleasure of that honorable state, to invest, appoint and empower yourself to come over as Governor of this colony, for the space of one year, and so the government to be honorably put upon this place, which might seem to add weight forever hereafter in the constant and successive derivation of the same." The intimation is a high compliment to Mr. Williams. We cannot but rejoice, however, that for any cause, the proposition was not acceded to, as it might have been drawn in precedent, and taken from the colony the choice of its chief officer.

A special court of Commissioners convened on the 20th of December. The Commissioners from Providence were

Thomas Angell,

Henry Brown,

William Wickenden,

Gregory Dexter,

Hugh Bewett,

James Ashton.

The object of this session was the trial of Hugh Bewett, who was accused by the President and Assistant of Warwick, of "Treason against the power and authority of the State of England." The trial occupied four days and resulted in the acquittal of the prisoner. The General court of trials had found him guilty and this reversal of their judgment by the Court of Commissioners gave rise to further divisions in this distracted colony.



At the election of Town officers in June

Gregory Dexter was chosen Town clerk.

Robert Williams, }  
Thomas Harris, } Town Deputies.

Thomas Harris, Treasurer.

Richard Waterman, Arthur Fenner, and John Field to make up a Town council. By an account on file in the city clerk's office, it appears that Hugh Bewett had been town Treasurer from 1649 to 1652. Among his disbursements on account of the Town, are the following.

Paid to Owcapocamine, the Sachem of Coweset for his and all Indians' rights of land at Neotoconnett,	£1 5
Paid to Mr. Roger Williams,	18
Paid more to his wife since he went to England,	5
Paid mending the bridge, highways beyond the bridge, mile-end cove, fence at Dickens and the pound these several years,	3

The whole amount of the disbursements was £74,1. What bridge was so early erected, must be matter of conjecture. Probably it was a bridge over West river, so called, which is within the present limits of the town of North-Providence. In January of this year, in other proceedings of the town, reference is had to the new bridge on West river. When the bridge at Weybosset was first erected is very doubtful, probably not till some years after this. In early times there was a fording place across the main river at low water, near Steeple-street.

1653.—The letters of the Council of State recalling Mr. Coddington's commission arrived in this



country early in this year. On the 18th February, Mr. Dyre the bearer of them, addressed a letter to the free inhabitants of the town of Providence, informing them that "upon Tuesday come sevensnight, at Portsmouth, on Rhode-Island, at Mr. Baulstone's house, I shall be there ready to attend the communication of the trust committed to my care, unto all such free inhabitants as shall there make their personal appearance." A letter of similar import was sent to Warwick, of an earlier date, for at a town meeting in Providence on the 20th of February reference is had to a letter from Warwick, dated the 15th containing a communication made to them by Mr Dyre. In answer to the letter from Warwick the town of Providence appointed commissioners to meet commissioners from that town. They met on the 25th. The commissioners from Providence were

Thomas Angell,

Gregory Dexter,

Henry Brown,

Hugh Bewett,

William Wickenenden,

Thomas Harris.

A reply was drawn up to a letter received from some individuals of the island, evidently relating to a reunion of the colony, and two commissioners from each town were deputed to consult with the authors of it generally as to the welfare of the colony, and to call a special meeting of all the commissioners to receive the report of their proceedings. They did not succeed in the objects of their mission.

The following extracts from a letter sent by the town of Providence to Mr. Williams, elucidate some of the transactions of these times.



“ Mr. Dyre’s presence and behavior here, hath occasioned much disturbance amongst us, for Mr. Dyre, coming first to Rhode-Island and showing the superscription of the state’s letter, to Baulstone, Sandford, Porter and Jeffries, they wrote to us to appoint time and place to meet them of the Island, to receive and order about the state’s letter ; but we apprehending that ourselves properly, who have sent you our agent, then did bear the name of Providence Plantations, we had much dispute with Mr. Dyre, who was then present in our meeting, about the matter : for Mr. Coddington, having a charter for Rhode-Island, we upon the main only, remained the colony of Providence Plantations, and so, by order of a court of commissioners, sent yourself as our particular agent for the renewing of the grand Charter unto us, without any desire to evade or oppose Mr. Coddington’s commission for governing Rhode-Island ; but wherein Mr. Clark went to England from the Island, was and is to us unknown, we having, as we ever had, only respect to yourself as our agent, although Dyre was pleased peremptorily to affirm, that you had joined with Mr. Clark, on whose shoulders and credit, together with himself, namely Dyre, the weight of our affairs was chiefly supported, and, therefore, the state’s letters and orders, were by him left at Rhode-Island, for, it appeared to him the island was the major part of the colony, and, in that respect, more eminently interested in those letters and orders, where they are detained, even until this day, we having with no small difficulty and industry, obtained as yet, only copies of them under the town clerk’s hand, of Newport. Indeed in our meeting, our agitations were many and somewhat fiery, for that, Dyre, together with Mr. Smith of Warwick, who was then present and president, William Field and Mr. Robert Williams, strove to persuade us upon the main, so to account ourselves as being in disorder, a confused rout, or as he acknowledged the Island was, and that all officers, places, orders of courts, law, and cases depending were all to be accounted null, and that we must all come to a popular meeting, as scattered stones, to lay a new foundation of government for the colony of Providence Plantations.

“ But we being still in the same order you left us, as also ob-



serving two great evils, such a course would bring upon us, first the hazard of involving all in the disorder and bloodshed which had been committed on Rhode-Island since their separation from us; secondly, the evading and frustrating of justice in divers weighty causes, then orderly depending in our court."

"But Dyre perceiving that we were not willing so to be persuaded, but finding ourselves in order and according to the directions in your letter, resolved to act as a colony in order, and so addressed ourselves by commissioners to meet with the Island about re-uniting them unto us, whereupon this Dyre took upon himself the power of the whole colony, and sent forth mandamuses, commanding all the free inhabitants to meet him at Mr. Baulstone's house." &c. &c.

On the first of March, probably the day named in Mr. Dyre's letter to Providence, there was an assembly of the colony, so called, holden at Portsmouth. Here the orders and letters from England were read and a vote passed, that the officers, who were in place when Mr. Coddington's charter obstructed, should act in their several offices until the next election, which was directed to be on the day formerly appointed. This assembly sent a letter to Providence containing distinct propositions for a re-union, and for the government of the colony till the next election. An answer was returned by Providence and Warwick, that they were willing to meet by Commissioners to advise and order about general affairs. They did not assent to the propositions from the island, nor was any meeting of Commissioners holden as they proposed; and the two towns on the main, and the two island towns, held separate Assemblies for General Election on the 17th day of May following. The Assembly of the main land towns, met at Providence.



Gregory Dexter was elected President,  
 John Sayles, Assistant for Providence,  
 Stukely Westcott, " for Warwick,  
 John Greene, jun. Recorder, Hugh Bewett, General Sergeant and John Sayles, Treasurer.

The same persons attended as Commissioners from Providence, as met in February preceding. A letter was sent to Portsmouth and Newport advising them of their proceedings, and alledging as a reason for the course they had taken, that they had received no answer to their previous letter. In accordance with the orders of the Council of State, to arm and defend themselves against the Dutch or enemies of the Commonwealth of England, and to act offensively against them so far as they could consistently with their own safety, they resolve, that no provisions shall be transported from the colony for the supply of the Dutch. Each Plantation was authorized to take such course as they should deem necessary for their own security, but no person was permitted to act offensively against the Dutch without the order and direction from a General Court of Commissioners.

The Assembly of the island towns was holden at Newport.

John Sanford was elected President,  
 Nicholas Easton, Assistant for Newport,  
 Richard Burden, " " Portsmouth,  
 William Lytherland, General Recorder, Richard Knight, General Sergeant, John Coggeshall, Treasurer, and John Easton, General Attorney. This Assembly continued in session two days. On the record of the second day's meeting is the following entry,



“Providence and Warwick men come in.” After this, Thomas Olney was elected General Assistant for Providence, and Randall Holden, for Warwick. In regard to warlike proceedings against the Dutch, this Assembly acted with much more decision and energy than the one at Providence. They agreed to assist the English on Long-Island, to lend them arms and to allow them to enlist twenty volunteers. They erected an Admiralty Court for the trial of prize causes and granted commissions to three persons to cruise against the Dutch or any enemies of the commonwealth of England.

Although it appears by the record that “Providence and Warwick men came in,” and probably joined in the election of general officers for these towns, only a part, and that a minority of each of these towns, was present. The difficulties still existed. The two towns adhered to the general officers that they had chosen. The steps taken by the Assembly of the island in regard to the Dutch, furnished fresh matter for disputes, or rather served as a pretence for the continuance of those previously commenced. It is a singular circumstance that the island towns, considering their more exposed situation, should have been so much more ready to involve themselves in a war with the Dutch, than were the main land towns. Neither the one nor the other could have long supported themselves against a foreign enemy, and they could hope for no assistance from the neighboring English colonies. In fact the united colonies did no more than they were obliged to do, to keep up appearances with the government



at home. They evidently preferred a prosperous neutrality, to the dangers and uncertainties of war.

The main land towns held a general court of commissioners at Providence, on the third day of June. The commissioners of Providence were,

Gregory Dexter,	William Wickenden,
John Sayles,	Thomas Angell,
Arthur Fenner,	James Ashton.

They ordered that such of the inhabitants of the colony as owned the commissions which had been granted by the General Assembly of the island towns against the Dutch, should be disfranchised, and not allowed to act in the government till they gave satisfaction to the towns there represented. They issued a remonstrance against the proceedings of that Assembly, which as it contains their account of these proceedings is here inserted.

“ A brief remonstrance of the two towns of Providence Plantations, at present the colony of Providence Plantations.

Whereas it pleased the honored council of State, to grant unto Mr. William Coddington, a commission to be Governor of Rhode-Island, whereby the towns of Portsmouth and Newport were disjoined from the colony of Providence Plantations, whereupon, we, the two towns of Providence and Warwick, having information thereof, assembled together and declared ourselves unanimously to stand embodied and incorporated as before by virtue of our charter, and immediately prepared to send our agent unto England for confirmation of our charter unto us, as more at large appeareth in the order made at Providence; and whereas about the 16th of the 12th month '52, William Dyre brought unto us, the two towns of Providence and Warwick, a letter subscribed by John Sanford, William Baulstone, John Porter and William Jeffries, of Rhode-Island, intimating that the said William Dyre had brought letters and orders for our directions, sent from the much honored, the council of state, and that they would



give us a meeting to hear the said letters at the time of our appointment, whereupon we the said two towns respectively chose six commissioners and gave them full power and authority to give answer to the said letters and also to act for us, as if we were present, according unto the directions of the said council, whether it were for re-uniting of the said two towns of Portsmouth and Newport unto us, or otherwise do in all general affairs, except election, according to their wisdoms, as in our several town orders, more at large appeareth, therefore our said commissioners being orderly chosen and assembled at Pawtuxet, the 25th of February, '52, prepared an answer to the said letter, and sent it by the hand of four messengers, two chosen out of each town, that so, if possible, they might fully effect an orderly meeting, and therefore declared their resolutions in their said letters, to meet with the two towns of Portsmouth and Newport by commissioners, six chosen out of each town, at the time and place of their appointment, and re-unite with the island, if the mind of the council of state's warrant was such, as more at large appeareth in their abovesaid letter; but no reply could our said commissioners procure by their said messengers, nor hitherto have received any; and at the return of the said four messengers, our said commissioners assembled at Pawtuxet aforesaid, the 9th of March '52, where the said messengers made their report, and declared that they could not procure the letters and orders, for our direction, sent from the honored council of state aforesaid, nor a copy thereof, although they were read before many people; thereupon, our said commissioners sent to Mr. Easton, in whose hands the said orders were, for them or a copy thereof, and another letter to both towns of Portsmouth and Newport, on purpose by the hand of two messengers, intimating unto the said two towns that Providence and Warwick had empowered them as aforesaid, to transact for the said two towns in all general affairs, as if all the inhabitants of the said two towns were present, and therefore proposed to both the towns on the island, that if they were willing to re-unite with us, then to choose six commissioners out of each town, and appoint time and place where we should meet them to order according to the council of state's direction, as more at large appeareth in their said letter; but they could



not procure any answer from neither of the said two towns; and whereas, after a long space of time, the town of Newport sent unto us certain propositions by the hand of Benedict Arnold, intimating their desires that we should meet them at Newport in May next, and choose six commissioners to prepare and so forth, which propositions were referred to our said commissioners to answer, and our said commissioners thus answered, that they were willing there to meet by commissioners, six chosen out of each town, and to re-unite and order for the peace of the whole colony, et cetera, in all general affairs, except election, provided the said town of Newport would give ten days notice before hand, that so they would meet by commissioners as more at large appeareth in our said commissioners' answer; but, forasmuch as neither our said commissioners, nor we the said two towns have received any answer from the said island by way of reply, we, therefore, the said two towns of Providence and Warwick, were necessitated to keep in the posture we were in, and proceeded to election of general officers according to law extant amongst us, the 17th of May, yet, notwithstanding all our aforesaid endeavors to re-unite the said two towns of Portsmouth and Newport unto us, which is not yet effected, the inhabitants of the said two towns have, as we are informed, in the name or by the authority of the colony of Providence Plantations, granted and given unto John Underhill, Edward Hull and William Dyre, a commission or commissions tending to war, which is like, for aught we see, to set all New-England on fire, for the event of war is various and uncertain, and although the honored council of state's direction to us is, videlicet, to offend the Dutch as we shall think necessary, yet we know not for what reason or for what cause the said inhabitants of the island have given forth the said commission: Therefore, we are enforced thus to declare, that if the said island shall attempt to engage us with them in the said commission, or in any other like proceedings, and shall use any force or violence upon us upon that account, that we will then address ourselves immediately to England, to petition for their honors' further direction unto us, which they have pleased to intimate in their late honors' pleasure sent by the hand of William Dyre;



for we are resolved, to use our utmost endeavors to free ourselves from all illegal and unjust proceedings.

By the Commissioners of the Colony,

JOHN GREENE, Jr. General Recorder."

The letter from Newport referred to in this remonstrance is here given, to show in part their views on the subject.

" Beloved friends and neighbors :

After our respects these are to inform you, of our desires to further the orders of our honored and well wishers, the honored council of State, and of your, together with our own safety, and peaceable well-being and that each may enjoy his own right in equity and that the face of authority may be established amongst us, the endeavoring whereof hath moved us to write unto you our propositions here underwritten, as also to send unto you a copy of the orders of the honored council of State, all which we have betruſted in the hands of our beloved messenger, Mr. Benedict Arnold, with the orders for the safe disposal of the forenamed copy and the delivery of these our motions.

That the next General Assembly for election, which will be the first Tuesday after the 15th of May, be held at Newport.

That the officers be chosen according to the accustomed rule in the laws established by authority of the charter confirmed by the honored council's order.

That all orders made by the towns of this colony, either jointly or apart, by authority of the charter, be authorized to be in force, until by a General Assembly repealed.

That all suits depending, that are by the law referred to the General Court of trials, may be issued at the next General Court, by such officers as shall be deputed at the time appointed by the former laws.

That a committee of six men in each town, be chosen to consider and ripen all matters that respect the colony, which the major votes of the towns assenting to, shall be established and stand in force.

That the General officers, that were deputed and engaged,



when Mr. Coddington's commission obstructed, be authorized and invested with power to act in their several commissions, until new be chosen for the general, but if any town see cause, they may be authorized to appoint what general officer they judge meet in that town, who may by the town clerk be engaged, if not before engaged, and be authorized to act by the rule prescribed.

That all the inhabitants that allow the propositions sent to each town, set to or subscribe their names for confirmation thereof; whose names being delivered to the several town clerks, shall be sealed up and sent to the President, Mr. Nicholas Easton, who with the council of that town shall open and shall signify the result to the several towns, and this to be performed by the 10th April next.

Further we thought good to insert what present course our town hath taken for our present security till a general order, namely;

That whereas by the honored council's order, we are to depute one or more to see that forts be made and arms provided and other things done as ordered, and whereas by a law made amongst us, each town hath the power of the militia, that seven men in our town are appointed to see that order performed, four of them concurring it stands in force, until the colony otherwise order. The men appointed are William Dyre, &c.

Newport, the 18th of March, 1652. Per me,

WILLIAM LYTHERLAND, Town Clerk.

In the behalf and by the order of the town of Newport."

Another court of commissioners was holden on the 13th of August. The Commissioners of Providence were the same as in June preceding.

The record of the election of town officers this year is lost. That a town meeting was holden for the purpose of election appears, and that is all. The next record preserved is under date of September 10th, 1654.

1654.—At the General Assembly holden in May the following named persons were elected officers of the colony.



Nicholas Easton, President.

Thomas Olney, Assistant for Providence.

Richard Burden, “ for Portsmouth.

Edward Smith, “ for Newport.

Randall Holden, “ for Warwick.

Joseph Torrey, General Recorder, John Coggeshall, Treasurer, Richard Knight, General Sergeant.

Though assistants were chosen, for Providence and Warwick, the re-union of the colony was not perfected. Those towns held no General Assembly for election as in the preceding year, from which it may be inferred, that a majority of the inhabitants in each had assented to the re-establishment of the colonial government in the manner proposed by the island towns. But that there was still a minority, who adhered to an opposite opinion, may with certainty be inferred from the proceedings of this Assembly. A committee of two from each town was appointed “for the preparing a way or some course concerning our dissenting friends.” It does not appear what course was proposed, but it may be reasonably supposed that their efforts to restore union and peace to the colony, were greatly forwarded by Mr. Williams and by the letters he brought with him from England. He arrived early in the summer, and brought with him the following letter from Sir Henry Vane.

“Loving and Christian Friends—I cannot refuse the bearer, Mr. Roger Williams, my kind friend and ancient acquaintance, to be accompanied with these few lines from myself to you upon his return to Providence colony, though perhaps my private and retired condition, which the Lord, in mercy, hath brought



me into, might have argued strongly enough for my silence. But indeed, something I hold myself bound to say to you, out of the christian love I bear you, and for his sake, whose name is called upon by you and engaged on your behalf. How is it, that there are such divisions amongst you, such headiness, disorders, tumults, injustice, the noise whereof echoes unto the ears of all, as well friends as enemies, by every return of ships from those parts? Is not the fear and awe of God amongst you to restrain? Is not the love of Christ in you, to fill you with yearning bowels, one toward another, and constrain you to live not unto yourselves, but unto him that died for you, yea, and is risen again? Are there no wise men amongst you? No public self-denying spirits, that, at least upon the grounds of common safety, equity and prudence, can find out some way or means of union and reconciliation for you amongst yourselves, before you become a prey to common enemies, especially, since this state, by the last letter from the council of state, gave you your freedom, as supposing that a better use would have been made of it, than there hath been. Surely when kindly and proper remedies are applied and are ineffectual, it speaks loudly and broadly the high and dangerous distemper of such a body, as if the wounds were incurable. But I hope better things from you, though I thus speak, and should be apt to think, that by commissioners agreed on and appointed on all parts, and on behalf of all interests, in a general meeting such a union and common satisfaction might ensue, as, through God's blessing, might put a stop to your growing breaches and distraction, silence your enemies, encourage your friends, honor the name of God, which of late hath been much blasphemed, by reason of you; and in particular refresh and revive the sad heart of him who mourns over your present evils, as being your very affectionate friend, to serve you in the Lord. H. VANE.

Belleau, the 8th of February, 1653—4.

This letter was followed by one from Mr. Williams himself, addressed to Gregory Dexter, who, it appears from the handwriting of the records, was then Town Clerk of Providence. After referring to the sacrifices he had made, and the labors he had per-



formed to establish the town and colony and the grand cause of truth and freedom of conscience, and painting in the glowing colors of truth the dangers that necessarily attend contention, and the certain ruin that would follow an appeal by either party to the government of England, he urged them with great earnestness to remove the obstruction to union and peace which they themselves had created, and if they were unable by free debate and conference with their opponents to remove all causes of disunion and distrust, then to leave such matters to the determination of arbitrators, to be mutually chosen from among the inhabitants of the colony. He besought them to send these propositions to their opponents in writing, and concluded his letter with a form of a letter for that purpose. It would seem from this letter of Mr. Williams, that one great cause of their disunion was the vote passed by the Assembly of the main land towns disfranchising such persons as acknowledged the validity of the commissions against the Dutch, granted by the Assembly of the island towns in May. The re-union was perfected by a Court of Commissioners in August. The following were the terms then agreed upon.

Articles of agreement of the Commissioners of the four towns, upon the re-uniting of the colony of Providence Plantations, as followeth, viz :

Whereas there have been differences and obstructions amongst the four towns of this colony of Providence Plantations in New-England, namely, Providence, Portsmouth, Newport and Warwick, arising by Mr. Coddington's commission, we, the commissioners of all the four towns do agree :

First. That all transactions done by the authority of the in-



habitants of the two towns of Rhode-Island, from the time of Mr. Coddington's commission's taking place there, until Mr. Dyre brought over further orders from the Honorable Council of state, in the year 1652, shall remain on the account of the two towns of the above said island ; and all the transactions of Providence and Warwick in that space, to remain on their own account. And further, that all the transactions of the aforesaid two towns on Rhode-Island, viz : Portsmouth and Newport, and a part of Warwick and Providence with them since Mr. Dyre's bringing the foresaid orders to this very time, shall remain on their own account ; and whatsoever transactions have been in the said time by the rest of the inhabitants of Warwick and Providence, professing themselves two towns, shall remain on their the said inhabitants' own account professing themselves two towns.

Secondly. We the commissioners of the four towns abovesaid, do agree and are willing to order this colony by the authority of the charter granted to us by the honored Parliament of the Commonwealth of England, bearing date the 14th day of March, 1643.

Thirdly. We agree that the General Court of this colony, or General Assembly to transact all affairs, except election, as making of laws, trial of general officers, &c. shall be held by six commissioners chosen by each town of the colony.

In confirmation hereof the commissioners above premised, have set our hands, namely :

PROVIDENCE.	{ Thomas Harris, Gregory Dexter, John Sayles,	William Wickenden, John Brown, Henry Brown.
PORTSMOUTH.	{ William Baulstone, Richard Burden, John Roome,	Thomas Cornell, John Briggs, William Hull.
NEWPORT.	{ Benedict Arnold, Richard Tew, John Coggeshall,	John Easton, William Lytherland, Thomas Gould.
WARWICK.	{ John Green, Sen. Randall Holden, Ezekiel Holyman,	John Green, Jun. John Townsend, Henry Townsend,



Thus was ended this most inauspicious state of affairs. With the light that the scanty records of those times afford, it may be unjust to attribute to Mr. Coddington the whole blame of the first division of the colony. He has left no known memorial either of his acts or motives. The estimate of them must be formed, from the reports and public acts of his opponents. He who has scanned and duly weighed evidence derived from such sources, and compared it with the statements of the opposite party, may be prepared to make a proper allowance for party prejudice and the excitement of private interest. But the slightest reflection will convince any one, that implicit confidence is not to be placed in it. As the case now stands, from those reports and public acts, Mr. Coddington appears, upon some disaffection, the nature or extent of which is not disclosed, to have sailed for England, without intimating to any one his ultimate intentions in relation to the Colony. While there, he obtained from Parliament a commission conferring extraordinary powers on himself. He was constituted Governor of the islands of Rhode-Island and Conanicut for life. With him rested the nomination of his council. It was not strange that the people of these islands should revolt against his authority. By the charter, they had the power of electing their own officers and making their own laws. And though by their free votes they had conferred on Mr. Coddington the highest offices in the colony, it was natural that they should wish that he should hold such offices only by their election. As free born Englishmen, they could not con-



sent to be ruled by a Governor selected for them by any power on earth. The main land towns of the colony must have received information of the soliciting and granting of this commission with mingled emotions of surprise and indignation. They of Providence had been pioneers in the great cause of religious freedom. Through their sufferings, privations and labors it had been planted, fostered and established. A charter from the Parliament of England had conferred on them, with the other towns, a political existence with unequalled civil privileges. One of those who had twice felt the scourge of religious persecution had raised his suicidal hand to destroy the glorious fabric which he had assisted to erect. He had perilled the cause for which he had suffered, and in the attempt had apparently reduced his companions to the very verge of ruin; for it divided the colony, which, united, was scarcely able to preserve its existence against those who coveted the little spot of earth on which it was established, and who religiously hated the colonists for the principles which they advocated.

The course taken by these towns was the only one they could have pursued. Mr. Coddington's commission did not in its terms affect their rights under the charter. It subjected the island towns to his government and there it stopped. They did well then, in clinging to the charter, and in seeking a confirmation of it from the English government. After the arrival of the orders of the council of state by Mr. Dyre, their course cannot be so easily defended. They richly deserved the rebukes which



they received from Sir Henry Vane. Their own statement furnishes no satisfactory excuse for their conduct. The neglect and refusal of Mr. Dyre to deliver the papers to them, and his persisting in delivering them to the old officers in the colonial government, might have been a wrong, but not such a wrong as would justify them in their wilful inattention to the best interests of the colony. Probably the old officers, those that were in place at the arrival of Mr. Coddington's commission, claimed the right to them. In such an event, the course that he proposed, was the only one at which neither of the claimants could justly complain. And the refusal of the main land towns to attend the General Assembly of all the freemen of the colony, before whom the letters and orders were to be read, cannot be fully justified. There must have been some other cause not entered in their records, which influenced them.

The granting of commissions, or letters of marque and reprisal, against the Dutch by the General Assembly, one would suppose a measure of doubtful expediency. It might have endangered the existence of the colony. But neither Providence or Warwick would have been the first or the most to be endangered or injured by it. They were agricultural townships. Their attention was principally directed to the cultivation of the land. They were both situated at some distance from the sea. If the Dutch had attempted to retaliate, both the towns of Newport and Portsmouth lay in their way. A very small naval force could have levied contributions upon them. It is probable that at that time they had



commenced improving the natural advantages of their situation, for trade and navigation. But aside from this, this act was passed by a General Assembly of the whole colony. All the towns had notice of it and could have attended. Some did attend from all the towns. If the majority of those present were in favor of the measure, it did not become the voluntary absentees to call them traitors and put them out of the protection of the law, or deprive them of their legal privileges. The dissensions in the mother country entered into and embittered the disputes which prevailed here. Among the colonists were some of all the parties that divided the English commonwealth. Their sufferings under the established religion of England, undoubtedly inclined the most of them in the outset against the King and the Hierarchy. There were some, and probably a majority at first, who desired rather to ameliorate than to overthrow the government. These, however, like many of the inhabitants of England, were led on, step by step, until nothing would content them but the entire demolition of monarchy. The following certificate from the records of the colony, proves that the change in opinion was gradual. Unless the signers had held or expressed different opinions, there was no seeming necessity for their subscribing such a declaration.

“ Providence, the 7th of the 1st mo. '52.

I do declare and promise that I will be true and faithful to the Commonwealth of England, as it is now establised, without a king or house of lords.

Thomas Harris,	Arthur Fenner,
William Wickenden,	James Ashton,
John Brown,	Thomas + Angell,
Samuel Bennett,	Gregory Dexter,
Henry Brown,	Hugh Bewett,
Thomas + Hopkins,	Edward Inman."



These signers were all Providence men. In the records of Warwick there was a more formal submission signed by the freemen. Subsequently they attempted to destroy it; but the evidence of its existence was perpetuated by the very means they used to destroy it. The following entry now stands in their records.

“This leaf was torn out by order of the town, this 29th of June 1667, it being the submission to the State of England without the King’s majesty, it being the 13th page.”

It required but a small circumstance, as the following paper shows, to arouse the feelings of some of the partizans of those days.

“Presented unto the town of Providence by Robert Williams, the loyal subject of the Commonwealth of England, that, according unto his engagement, endeavors to vindicate the just rights of honorable authority in these parts.

I do hereby signify unto this town, whom I honor as a town, in subjection unto said right honorable Commonwealth, that the subcommittee at Warwick, have declared disloyalty unto the Commonwealth of England, for the said committee declare, then dated the 24th of December, 1652, against the letter of credence ordered and sent unto our agent, Mr. Roger Williams, supplicating their honors’ favor and pleasure in these parts.

ROBERT WILLIAMS,

Deputy of the town of Providence.”

A few days before the re-union of the colony was perfected, the following answer was prepared and sent to Sir Henry Vane.

Providence, 27. 6. 54.

“Sir—Although we are grieved at your late retirement from the helm of public affairs, yet we rejoice to reap the sweet fruits of your rest in your pious and loving lines, most seasonably sent unto us. Thus the sun, when he retires his brightness from the



world, yet, from under the very clouds, we perceive his presence and enjoy some light and heat and sweet refreshing. Sir, your letters were directed to all and every particular town of this Providence colony. Surely, sir, among the many providences of the Most High towards this town of Providence, and this Providence colony, we cannot but see apparently his gracious hand, providing your honorable self, for so noble and true a friend to an outcast and despised people. From the first beginning of this Providence colony, occasioned by the banishment of some from the Massachusetts, we say ever since, to this day, we have reaped the fruits of your constant loving kindness and favor towards us. Oh, sir, whence then is it, that you have bent your bow, and shot your sharp and bitter arrows against us? whence is it, that you charge us with divisions, disorders, &c. ? Sir, we humbly pray, your gentle acceptance of our two-fold answer.

First, we have been greatly disturbed and distracted by the ambition and covetousness of some amongst us. Sir, we were in complete order, until Mr. Coddington, wanting that public self-denying spirit which you commend to us in your letter, procured, by most untrue information, a monopoly of part of the colony, viz. Rhode-Island, to himself, and so occasioned our general disturbance and distractions.

Secondly, Mr. Dyre, with no less want of public spirit, being ruined by party contentions with Mr. Coddington, and being entrusted to bring from England, the letters of the council of state for our re-uniting, he hopes for a recruit to himself by other men's goods; and, contrary to the state's intentions and expressions, plungeth himself and some others in most unnecessary and unrighteous plundering both of Dutch, French and English also, to our great grief, who protested against such abuse of our power from England: and the end of it is to be shame and reproach of himself and the very English name, as all these parts do witness.

Sir, our second answer is, (that we may not lay all the load upon other men's backs) that possibly a sweet cup hath rendered many of us wanton and too active, for we have long drank of the cup of as great liberties as any people that we can hear of under the whole heaven. We have not only been long free (together



with all New-England) from the iron yoke of wolfish bishops and their popish ceremonies, (against whose cruel oppressions, God raised up your noble spirit in Parliament) but we have sitten quiet and dry from the streams of blood spilt by that war in our native country. We have not felt the new chains of the Presbyterian tyrants, nor, in this colony, have we been consumed with the over zealous fire of the (so called) godly christian magistrates. Sir, we have not known what an excise means; we have almost forgotten what tythes are, yea, or taxes either, to church or commonwealth. We could name other special privileges, ingredients of our sweet cup, which your great wisdom knows to be very powerful (except more than ordinary watchfulness) to render the best men wanton and forgetful. But, blessed be your love and your loving heart and hand, awakening any of our sleepy spirits by your sweet alarm, and blessed be your noble family, root and branch, and all your pious and prudent engagements and retirements. We hope you shall no more complain of the saddening of your loving heart, by the men of Providence town or of Providence colony, but that when we are gone and rotten, our posterity and children after us, shall read in our town records your pious and favorable letters and loving kindness to us, and this our answer and real endeavor after peace and righteousness; and to be found, sir, your most obliged and most humble servants, The Town of Providence,

in Providence Colony in New-England,  
GREGORY DEXTER, Town Clerk."

After signing the articles of re-union, the commissioners continued in session and made several orders and laws. All laws in force before the division of the colony, were declared to be in force until repealed, all trade with the Dutch was prohibited, the law against selling liquor to the Indians was re-enacted, and a General Election ordered to take place on the 12th of September, at Warwick.

A court of commissioners met at Warwick on the day appointed for election. The commissioners from



Providence were the same as those at the August session, except Henry Reddock, in the place of John Sayles. They direct that the General election in future shall be holden on the Tuesday after the 15th of May. Towns were directed to choose Commissioners on the first Tuesday of the same month. Letters of "Humble Thanksgiving" were sent to His Highness the Lord Protector, to Sir Henry Vane, and to Mr. John Clark. All legal process was ordered to be issued in the name of "His Highness the Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland and Ireland, and the dominions thereto belonging." The main land and island towns were authorized, together or apart, to establish courts. At this General Assembly the following persons were elected colony officers till the next May.

Roger Williams, President.

Thomas Harris, Assistant for Providence,

John Roome, " for Portsmouth,

Benedict Arnold, " for Newport,

Randall Holden, " for Warwick.

William Lytherland, General Recorder, Richard Knight, General Sergeant, Richard Burden, Treasurer, and John Cranston, General Attorney.

In this year is the first record of the election of military officers in Providence. The Election was made on the 6th of November.

Thomas Harris, was chosen Lieutenant.

John Smith (the miller) " Ensign.

Benjamin Smith " Sergeant.

At the same meeting it was resolved, that one



man on every farm one mile from the town, might be left at home on training days.

1655.—The following persons were elected General officers of the colony at the General Assembly holden at Providence.

Roger Williams,	President,
Thomas Olney,	Assistant for Providence,
John Roome,	“ for Portsmouth,
Benedict Arnold,	“ for Newport,
Randall Holden,	“ for Warwick.

William Lytherland, General Recorder, George Parker, General Sergeant, John Sanford, General Treasurer, John Cranston, General Attorney, and John Greene, General Solicitor.

At the Court of Commissioners, the following were from Providence.

Roger Williams,	Arthur Fenner,
William Wickenden,	Richard Waterman,
Thomas Harris,	John Sayles.

All the inhabitants of the colony were required by this court, to sign a submission to his Highness the Protector and the Parliament; if any refused, they were declared to be entitled, to “no benefit or privilege in any law of the colony.” The General Court of trials were to set once a year in each town. It seems from the record that Thomas Olney was then in arms against authority, but it could not have been a very serious rebellion, as he took his engagement as Assistant. Before this time there had been several laws passed to prevent the sale of strong liquors to the Indians, but as they had proved ineffic-



ient wholly to prevent that evil, the court of Commissioners act again on this fruitful topic of legislation. They appointed two "Ordinary Keepers" in each town. These were the only persons authorized to sell any sort of "strong drink" "either to English or Indian in a less quantity than a gallon." They were prohibited from selling "above a quarter of a pint of liquor or wine a day" to any Indian. In case an Indian was found drunk, he was to be fined, and "whipt or laid neck and heels" and "the ordinary keeper by whose means he is made drunk shall pay twenty shillings for each person's transgression." The price of liquor at retail was fixed at not over four shillings a quart. All liquor that was brought into the colony was directed to be recorded, and an excise of five shillings paid for every anker of liquor and a quarter cask of wine, for the use of the town where entered. These measures were undoubtedly dictated by a desire of self preservation, but while they effected the safety of the colonists against the Indians, they must have greatly tended to the advantage of the Indians themselves. The ordinary keepers appointed for Providence, were Roger Mowry and Richard Perry. Notwithstanding such appointments, the towns had a right to appoint others and remove those appointed by the Commissioners. Providence and Warwick were required to unite in the erection of a prison at Warwick at the cost of £41, of which Providence was required to pay £6, and another prison at Providence and a pair of stocks at the cost of £14.

A special court of commissioners was holden at



Portsmouth on the 28th of June. The commissioners of Providence were

Roger Williams,

William Dyre,

Thomas Olney,

James Barker,

William Field,

Matthew West.

The meeting was called in consequence of a letter received from His Highness. The following order made at this court, while it implies that the greatest decorum was not always preserved in that body, also proves that the majority of the commissioners were fully sensible of the importance of it.

“It is ordered, that in case any man shall strike another person in the court, he shall either be fined £10, or be whipped, according as the court shall see meet.” At the commencement of the records of the colony for this year is the roll of the freemen of the Colony. The number in Providence, was forty-two, in Portsmouth, fifty-two, in Newport, eighty-three, and in Warwick, thirty-eight.

At a town meeting in June, the following officers were elected. Richard Waterman and Thomas Harris, Town Magistrates, John Sayles, Town Clerk.

Roger Williams, Robert Williams, and William Field, were appointed to make up the Town Council and Samuel Bennett, Town Sergeant. The first entry in the record of the proceedings of the town on Election day probably alludes to the same facts, which constituted the charge made against Thomas Olney in the Court of Commissioners. It is as follows.

“Whereas there has been a great debate this day, about Thomas Olney, Robert Williams, John Field, William Harris



and others, concerning the matter of a tumult and disturbance in the winter, under pretence of a voluntary training, it was at last concluded by vote, that for the Colony's sake, who have since chosen Thomas Olney an Assistant, and for the public union and peace's sake, it should be passed by, and no more mentioned."

Happy would it have been for town and colony, if many of their previous complaints had been so disposed of. The extent of the previous difficulties and disunion in the town may well be inferred from the following circumstance. Henry Fowler was complained of to the town for being married without due publication. The law of the town required that such publications should be by a magistrate's notification set on some tree in the town street for a fortnight. He pleaded, that "the divisions of the town were the cause of his so doing," and his fine was remitted. The town directed that there should be four military trainings each year. The following was the law regulating proceedings before the town courts, which was this year recorded in pursuance of the following order.

"Ordered that the program of laws in use, that formerly were in a loose paper, be written in the Book, which are as followeth.

#### THE PROGRESS IN LAW.

First. All actions and cases shall be tried by six townsmen in the nature of a jury, yet, with the liberty of not being put on swearing; and these six men to be pricked down by the town, quarterly, and warned three days before the court, by the Sergeant, to be ready at the day and hour appointed, under penalty of three shillings for their neglect.

Second. All actions shall be tried by the town, let the sum be what it will be, which are between party and party." [Against this item there is the following entry in the margin.] "This or-



der was and is much controverted, as interfering with the General and the town council."

Third. All writs shall go from the clerk, which shall be warrant sufficient; and he to have for his writing, six pence; but if the action be above £5, then, he shall have for his writ, one shilling. If the two parties do agree, then shall he have for withdrawing the action, four pence if £5; if above, then six pence; but if the parties do agree and the plaintiff withdraw after the action be entered, then the suit shall go forward, until it come to an issue, and the plaintiff pay charge, both of jury warned and all others.

Fourth. The sergeant shall serve the writ, which if it be against a housekeeper, a warning to appear at the day and place of trial, shall be sufficient; but if it be not against a townsman, the sergeant shall keep him in safe custody, until bail or agreement; and the bail shall be an housekeeper of our town or one known to be sufficient to discharge the debt or damage that may ensue; and the sergeant shall have for his pains in serving the writ, if the debt be £5, one shilling, if above £5, eighteen pence, and after the rate of two shillings per day for waiting. If not bailed within two hours after the arrest, the sergeant shall give notice of the arrest to the clerk.

Fifth. The plaintiff shall declare his case in writing within three days after the writ be served, and shall pay for filing his declaration, four pence; which if the defendant will see, the clerk shall copy it out, and shall have for his pains, sixpence. If it exceed ten handsome lines, then he shall have one shilling, but if it be half a sheet of paper, then he shall have two shillings.

Sixth. It shall be in the defendant's liberty, whether he will answer in writing or no. If he do, he shall put in his answer within three days after he hath received the declaration; provided, that he take a copy of the declaration within two days after that it be put in, that the trial be not hindered, and the defendant to pay to the clerk for filing his answer four pence.

Seventh. The clerk, against the day of trial, shall draw up the declaration and answer, if there be any; if none, then the declaration, and shall read them twice, and the plaintiff, if he will, may open his case more fully, either by himself or his



attorney, and so, likewise, the defendant shall answer either by himself or his attorney, when they shall have time sufficient to debate the cause between them, until the bench shall say it is enough, who shall be judges of the court and no other; which judges shall engage the witnesses, or cause the clerk to read it to them, as also examine the witnesses, engage the six men, and if they see it good, counsel the six men, who are to go upon the case, to deal truly in it, knowing their engagements.

Eighth. After the six men have heard the case pleaded, they shall go aside to consult about it, the sergeant attending, that none come to speak with them without the license of the court. After they are returned the clerk shall call them man by man, to see if they be all there, which, if they be, he shall ask them if they be agreed on their verdict. If answer be made by them yea, the clerk shall ask, who they find for, and according as they find, shall write it down. If they find for the plaintiff, he shall know of them what damages and costs, and, if the judge please, they may have twelve pence for each man of them before they speak, which the plaintiff shall pay them, and also twelve pence to the sergeant for attending the jury or triers.

Ninth. If the case go against the defendant, he shall have ten days liberty before the execution be served, to remove his case, if he judge himself wronged, which, with a writ from any of the general assistants or president, he may. Provided that he pay the present charge of court, and put in sufficient bail to answer it in the colony court.

Tenth. The execution shall go from the deputies, under their hands, and the sergeant shall have for serving it, two shillings and sixpence; and what goods or chattels or whatever is taken, shall be prized by two townsmen named by the sergeant, and if none will buy them, then shall be, so much as the debt and damage cometh to, delivered to the plaintiff. If there be overplus delivered to him, he shall return it to the owners in any merchantable pay the plaintiff hath. In case he have not goods sufficient, the person must satisfy according to the general order. The sergeant shall have two shillings and sixpence the day paid him by the plaintiff for waiting on the execution, and the plaintiff to reckon it to the whole sum."



1656.—At a court of Commissioners holden at Warwick, on the 11th day of March, the Commissioners from Providence were

Roger Williams,	Richard Waterman,
Thomas Olney,	Thomas Harris,
William Field,	Thomas Roberts.

William Coddington was one of the Commissioners from Newport. His election gave dissatisfaction to the court and was the subject of a special investigation. He professed in the court, that he freely submitted "to the authority of His Highness in this colony as it is now united and that, with all his heart." This removed all dissatisfaction. His election to that office clearly evinces that nothing in his conduct had shaken the confidence of his fellow colonists in his integrity. The court adjourned to the 17th, when the same Commissioners were present from Providence, except Benedict Arnold instead of Thomas Roberts. A law was passed, requiring publication of marriage to be made either in a town meeting, or "on a training day at the head of the company" or by a writing under a magistrate's hand set in some public place.

The General Assembly for Election was holden at Portsmouth.

Roger Williams was elected President.

Thomas Olney, Assistant for Providence,

William Baulstone, " for Portsmouth,

John Coggeshall, " for Newport,

Randall Holden, " for Warwick,

John Sanford, General Recorder, George Parker, General Sergeant, John Easton, General Attorney,



John Sanford, Treasurer, and Richard Bulgar, General Solicitor.

The Commissioners from Providence were  
Roger Williams,                      Thomas Harris,  
Thomas Olney,                      Richard Waterman,  
William Field,                      Thomas Roberts.

At another court of Commissioners holden at Portsmouth on the 10th of October, the Commissioners from Providence were

Roger Williams,                      Thomas Harris,  
Thomas Olney,                      Hugh Bewett,  
Richard Waterman,                      John Tripp.

At a town meeting in January, permission was given to such as pleased to erect a fort on "Stampers' hill." It has been handed down by traditon, that soon after the settlement of Providence, a body of Indians approached the town in a hostile manner. Some of the townsmen by running and stamping on this hill, induced them to believe that there was a large number of men stationed there to oppose them, upon which they relinquished their design and retired. From this circumstance the hill was always called Stampers' hill, or more generally, the Stampers. Stampers street passes along the brow of this Hill. At the same meeting another court was erected having jurisdiction over all disputes not exceeding forty shillings in amount. The persons chosen for the judges of this court, were, Roger Williams, Thomas Olney, and Thomas Harris. At the town meeting in June,

John Sayles was elected Town Clerk.

Arthur Fenner and William Field, Town Deputies.



Richard Waterman, Thomas Harris, with the President, Assistant and Town Deputies, Town-Council, Thomas Harris, Town Treasurer, and Samuel Bennett, Town Sergeant.

A town law passed at this meeting, declared all the inhabitants, though not admitted freemen, liable to be elected to office, and fineable for not serving, if elected. There would be but little use for such a law in modern times.

1657.—The General Court of Election was holden this year at Newport.

Benedict Arnold, was chosen President.

Arthur Fenner, Assistant for Providence.

William Baulstone, “ for Portsmouth.

Richard Tew, “ for Newport.

Randall Holden, “ for Warwick.

John Sanford, General Recorder, Richard Knight, General Sergeant, John Greene, Jr. General Attorney, John Sanford, General Treasurer, James Rogers, General Solicitor.

The Comissioners from Providence were

Thomas Harris, Thomas Walling,

John Sayles, Samuel Bennett,

Henry Bull, Hugh Bewett.

Mr. Williams entered a complaint at this court against William Harris, for high treason. All proceedings on the complaints were postponed on account of Mr. William's absence. The result of the investigation at a subsequent court, was the following vote.

“Concerning William Harris his book and speeches upon it, was found therein delivered, as for doctrine, having much bowed



the scriptures to maintain it, that he that can say it is his conscience, ought not to yield subjection to any human order amongst men. Whereas the said Harris has been charged for the said book and words with high treason, and inasmuch as we being so remote from England cannot be so well acquainted in the laws thereof in that behalf provided, as the state now stands, though we cannot but conclude his behavior therein to be both contentious and seditious, we thought best therefore, to send over his writing, with the charge and his reply to Mr. John Clark, desiring him to commend the matter, in our and the Commonwealth's behalf, for further judgment as he shall see the cause require, and in the meantime to bind the said Harris in good bonds to the good behavior until their sentence be known."

The bond required was for £500.

At the June Town meeting, John Sayles was chosen Town Clerk, Arthur Fenner and Henry Brown, Town Deputies, John Jones, Town Sergeant, and John Sayles, Town Treasurer. In August, Roger Williams, Thomas Olney, William Field, Arthur Fenner, Henry Brown and Thomas Harris were chosen Town Council. The number of freemen to make a Town meeting was reduced in October from ten to seven.

1658.—A Court of Commissioners met at Portsmouth on the 10th day of March. The Commissioners from Providence were

John Smith,	William Carpenter,
Thomas Olney,	James Sweet,
William Field,	Edward Inman.

In 1656, the Government of Massachusetts was again called upon to exert itself to protect the churches against heresy and schism. Some of the people called Quakers arrived in Boston that year. Failing to learn from experience the inefficiency of cor-



poral punishment to correct erroneous opinions, or produce unity in churches, the authorities of Massachusetts again inflicted it with the greatest severity. Fine, imprisonment, banishment, whipping and death were in this case successively resorted to. But all in vain, so long as these new sectaries found shelter in the colony of Providence Plantations. Aware of this, the Commissioners of the United Colonies, in September 1657, addressed a letter to the President of this city of refuge. They urged him to send away such Quakers as were then in the colony and prohibit others from entering it. He laid this letter before the court of Commissioners. In their answer they state their intention to enforce all the laws of the colony, and to oblige all of that class of people that had come or should come into the colony to perform all duties required of other citizens. In case of refusal, they add they shall apply to the Government at home for further orders in respect to them, "so that where-withal there may be no damage or infringement of that chief principle in our charter, concerning freedom of conscience." They state further, that "freedom of different consciences to be protected from enforcement was the principal ground of our charter, both with respect to our humble suit for it, as also, to the true intent of the honorable and renowned Parliament of England in the granting of the same unto us, which freedom we still prize as the greatest happiness men can possess in this world." They did not violate it toward the Quakers. The colony always remained a refuge for them and all others who were oppressed or per-



secuted for conscience's sake. From the foregoing extracts, it is evident that the omission of every provision in relation to religion in the charter was not matter of accident. The powers granted were in conformity with the petition of the inhabitants, limited to civil things. The omission and limitation were intended by Parliament and were supposed by the colony, to confer the utmost liberty in religious concerns. At the General Election in May,

Benedict Arnold	was chosen	President,
William Field,	Assistant for	Providence,
William Baulstone,	"	for Portsmouth,
Joseph Clarke,	"	for Newport,
Randall Holden,	"	for Warwick.

John Sanford, General Recorder, Richard Knight, General Sergeant, John Sanford, Treasurer, John Greene, General Attorney, James Rogers, General Solicitor.

The names of the Commissioners who attended the Court at this time are not entered in the record. Those chosen by Providence were

Arthur Fenner,	Daniel Field,
Richard Waterman,	Zachariah Rhodes,
Henry Brown,	Valentine Whitman.

It seems that the orders formerly passed for the erection of prisons in the different towns had not been complied with. They were at this court repealed, and the prison then being erected at Newport was adopted as a prison for the whole colony. Providence was required to pay to Newport £30 toward the erection of it.



The court met again November 2d, when the commissioners from Providence were

Roger Williams,	Richard Waterman,
William Field,	Roger Mowry,
Thomas Olney,	James Ashton.

Further letters having passed between this colony and the Commissioners of the United Colonies, in relation to the Quakers, this court addressed a letter to the Agent of the Colony in England on the subject from which the following extracts are made.

“We have now a new occasion given us by an old spirit with respect to the colonies round about us, who seem to be offended with us, because a sort of people, called by the name of Quakers, who are come amongst us, who have raised up divers, who at present seem to be of their spirit, whereat the colonies about us seem to be offended with us, being the said people have their liberty with us, are entertained in our houses or any of our assemblies: and for the present, we have found no just cause to charge them with the breach of the civil peace.” After stating that “the offence our neighbors take against us is because we take not some course against the said people, either to expel them from amongst us, or take such courses against them as themselves do, who are in fear lest their religion should be corrupted by them,” they added, “we fly as a refuge in all civil respects to his Highness and honorable council, as not being subject to any other in matters of our civil state, so may it please you, to have an eye and ear open, in case our adversaries should speak to undermine us in our privileges granted unto us, and plead our cause in such sort as that we may not be compelled to exercise any civil power over men’s consciences, so long as human orders in point of civility are not corrupted and violated”

The court resolved that thereafter there should be but one Court of Commissioners in a year, and that to be holden at the time of the Election in May. The right of the freemen assembled in their town



meetings to annul the laws made by their commissioners, was still reserved. Within ten days after the rising of the court a copy of every law passed was to be sent each town and within ten days after that, the freemen of each town were to debate it, and in case of disapproval, send their votes against it to the Recorder. If he found, on counting the votes so returned to him, that a majority of the freemen in each town disapproved the law, it was thenceforth annulled. The colony records show a meeting of a "General Council of the Colony" in October of this year. It was composed of the President, Assistants and deputies or magistrates of the several towns. There is no law establishing such a council, nor are their powers or duties to be ascertained, except from their acts. It does not appear that it ever was in session but three times. At the first meeting no act is recorded as having been done, from which any inference can be drawn.

The reason of calling the second meeting is stated by the President to be, that Pomham, an Indian Sachem near Pawtuxet, "had made an insurrection in the colony" about which he wished the advice of the council. The last time this council was in session was on the 11th day of March 1659. They then direct the proclamation concerning His Highness Richard, Lord Protector, to be published in the several towns on the Tuesday following, at the head of each trainband and in presence of "all well-affected people."

At a town meeting on the 27th day of January, 1658, the town council made a report relating to



the estate of Nicholas Power, who had died intestate. They had endeavored, it would seem, to settle his estate, according to the provisions of the general law of the colony, but the widow would not consent to such settlement and the council had no power to compel her. The matter was referred by the town to the next court of commissioners, who do not appear to have acted on the subject. About ten years after this, the estate being still unsettled, the council made a will for the said Nicholas, under their hands and seals. Where they obtained such power does not appear, but it was exercised repeatedly not only in Providence but in Warwick. Wills so made were not simply divisions and distribution of the intestates' estate among heirs, but in some instances specific bequests and devises were made, and estates for life, in tail and in fee created, as the council supposed the interests of all concerned required. In the proceedings of the town in May, is the first resolution as to what qualified or constituted a freeman of the town. It was then resolved, that all those who enjoyed lands within the jurisdiction of the town, should be freemen of the town. There is no record of the election of the town officers this year. The latest records of the year, are in the hand writing of John Sayles.

1659.—At the general election which was holden at Providence,

Benedict Arnold,	was elected President,
William Field,	Assistant for Providence,
William Baulstone,	“ for Portsmouth,
Joseph Clark,	“ for Newport,
Randall Holden,	“ for Warwick.



John Sanford, General Recorder, James Rogers, General Sergeant, John Sanford, General Treasurer, John Greene, General Attorney, and James Rogers, General Solicitor.

At the Court of Commissioners, the Commissioners from Providence, were

William Field,	Arthur Fenner,
Thomas Olney,	Thomas Hopkins,
John Sayles,	James Ashton.

At this court a letter was drawn up to be sent to "The most Serene and Illustrious, His Highness, the most renowned Richard, Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland and Ireland, and the dominions thereto belonging," on his accession to that dignity. A rate of £50 was ordered for Mr. Clark; of this Providence and Warwick were each required to pay £9, Portsmouth £14, and Newport £18. Another meeting was called on the 23d day of August, at which

William Field,	Zachary Rhodes,
Roger Williams,	John Smith,
William Carpenter,	John Sayles,

acted as commissioners from Providence. It is probable that this court was called in consequence of letters from Mr. Clark. A further rate of £50 was ordered for his use, of which Providence was required to pay £11, Portsmouth £10, Newport £20, and Warwick £9. All legal process was required to be issued in the name of the supreme authority of the Commonwealth of England.

At the June town meeting for election of town officers,



Thomas Olney, Jun., was elected Town Clerk.

William Carpenter and Thomas Olney, Sen., Town Deputies.

John Sayles, Town Treasurer, John Fenner, Town Sergeant.

Roger Williams, Arthur Fenner and John Sayles, to make up the Town Council.

No mention is made of any further proceedings against William Harris, on the charge of High Treason. The agent of the colony probably referred to it in his communications to the colony, and it was no further prosecuted at his suggestion. The charge however, laid the foundation of a long and violent feud between him and Mr. Williams. It divided the inhabitants into parties, which lasted many years. The biographer of Mr. Williams says that "Mr. W. so disliked Mr. Harris, that he would not write his name at length, but abbreviated it thus, W. Har." Though this was his usual way of writing Mr. Harris' name, it was not invariably so. In a letter of his to John Whipple, now in the Cabinet of the Rhode-Island Historical Society, dated August 24, 1669, he writes "W. Harris." This letter was not written after the frosts of age had quenched the angry feud between them. There are many passages in it, which show all the vigor of youthful passion.

1660.—The General Election was holden at Portsmouth.

William Brenton,	was elected President,
William Field,	Assistant for Providence,
William Baulstone,	" for Portsmouth,
Benedict Arnold,	" for Newport,
John Greene,	" for Warwick.



John Sanford, General Recorder and Treasurer, James Rogers, General Sergeant, John Easton, General Attorney.

The commissioners from Providence were

William Brenton,	Arthur Fenner,
William Field,	William Carpenter,
Benedict Arnold,	Thomas Hopkins.

The law of November, 1658, with respect to annulling laws by the freemen, in their town meetings, was amended so as to permit the votes against the laws to be returned at any time within three months after the town meetings, and so that a majority of the freemen of the colony could annul any law. By the act of 1658, it required a majority of the freemen of each town. Here was a great step toward the consolidation of the towns and one that must have added much strength to the colony Government. A committee was appointed at this court, to consider of a way for making a bridge over the Pawtuxet river.

Very soon after the death of Cromwell, the people of England perceived that his son and successor, Richard, was not capable of holding the reins of government. After a short and inglorious attempt to do so, he retired from public life, and Charles the Second ascended the throne of his ancestors, with the almost unanimous good wishes of his subjects. He landed in England on the 24th day of May and entered London on the 8th day of June. Soon after the news of these events arrived in this country, a Court of Commissioners met at Warwick. This was on the 18th day of October. The Commissioners from Providence were



William Field,	John Fenner,
William Harris,	Joseph Torrey,
Arthur Fenner,	Thomas Hopkins.

A letter from Mr. Clark was read, and also King Charles' letters to the Parliament and House of Commons, and also his declaration and proclamation. They passed an act acknowledging him as their liege King and the following vote prescribing the time and form for "solemnizing his proclamation."

"It is ordered, that on the next Wednesday, which will be the 24th of this instant month, each town in this colony shall, then, at the head of the company of each train band, solemnize the proclamation of the Royal Majesty, and that the captain of each town is hereby required and authorised to call the train band together to solemnize the said proclamation on the foresaid day, if the weather do permit, if not, then it is to be done on the next fair day; and that all children and servants shall have their liberty on that day"

A commission was ordered to be sent to Mr. Clark to procure a renewal of the charter from the King.

At a town meeting holden on the 27th day of January, the town voted that every person who should kill a wolf in Providence, might demand, of every owner of cattle, a half-penny for every head of cattle he owned.

The town preferred a petition to the court of commissioners to be released from the payment of £30 toward the erection of a prison at Newport. They state that the prison would be completely useless to them, living so far distant, and that they had been obliged to make large disbursements amounting to £160 in the erection of a bridge. This was probably at Weybosset. At the town meeting in June,



Thomas Olney, Jr. was chosen Town Clerk. Thomas Olney, sen. and William Carpenter, Town Deputies, Stephen Northup, Town Sergeant, Edward Inman, Thomas Hopkins and Thomas Walling, to make up the Town Council, John Sayles, Town Treasurer.

1661.—William Brenton was elected President, this year.

William Field,	Assistant for Providence,
William Baulstone,	“ for Portsmouth,
Benedict Arnold,	“ for Newport,
John Greene,	“ for Warwick.

Joseph Torrey, General Recorder, James Rogers, General Sergeant, Caleb Carr, General Treasurer, John Easton, General Attorney, and Peter Tallman, General Solicitor.

The Commissioners from Providence were

William Field,	Thomas Roberts,
William Arnold,	Zachary Rhodes,
Thomas Harris,	James Barker.

It was proposed at the court of commissioners, to raise £200 in the several towns, to defray the expense of sending two agents to England. They appointed a committee to solicit subscriptions, and to select and instruct the agents. After some part of the subscription had been obtained, the project was abandoned, probably on account of letters received from Mr. Clark.

At a court of commissioners holden on the 27th day of August, the commissioners from Providence were

Roger Williams,	Joseph Torrey,
William Field,	Philip Tabor,
Thomas Olney,	John Anthony.



Upon consideration of Mr. Clark's letters, they resolved to send him a letter of thanks for his care and diligence, and also his commission, as agent, which had been ordered the year before. It was also agreed to raise £200 by a tax for him, of which Providence was to pay £40, Portsmouth £40, Newport £85, and Warwick £35.

At the town meeting in June, Thomas Olney was chosen Town Clerk, Thomas Harris, and Arthur Fenner, Town Deputies, John Sayles, Town Treasurer. Thomas Olney, sen., Roger Williams, and William Carpenter, to make up the Town Council.

1662.—At the General Election which was holden this year in Warwick,

Benedict Arnold,	was chosen President,
William Field,	Assistant for Providence,
William Baulstone,	“ for Portsmouth,
Richard Tew,	“ for Newport,
John Greene,	“ for Warwick.

Joseph Torrey, General Recorder, James Rogers, General Sergeant, John Easton, General Attorney, John Sanford, General Treasurer, and Richard Bulgar, General Solicitor.

The commissioners from Providence were

William Field,	Thomas Harris, sen.
Thomas Olney,	William Harris,
Arthur Fenner,	William Carpenter.

From an act passed at this court, it is apparent, that the law made in 1648 requiring conveyances of land to be in writing and to be recorded, had not been observed, and that in many instances, attempts had been made to transfer lands by parol. Justly



fearful that these would produce great confusion in titles and might lead to litigation, this court enacted, that any person in possession of land, claiming the fee, might record his claim, which should stand for a title against even the real owner, unless a suit was brought for it within a short and limited time.

Another court was holden on the 28th day of October, the same commissioners attended from Providence, except Zachary Rhodes, in place of Thomas Olney.

At the annual town meeting in June,  
Thomas Olney, jr. was chosen town Clerk.

Thomas Olney, sen. and William Carpenter, Town Deputies, John Sayles, Town Treasurer.

Roger Williams, Thomas Harris, jr. and John Brown, to make up the Town Council. At this meeting a bridge was ordered to be built over Mo-shassuck river, near Thomas Olney, jr's. dwelling-house. A committee was appointed to procure materials and finish the work, before haying time. It is believed that Thomas Olney, jr. at that time lived in his house under the Stampers. He disposed of a house at that place by his will, in which it is called his mansion house.

Near the commencement of this year the purchasers began to hold meetings distinct from town meetings, for the transaction of business relating to the propriety, but they had the same clerk, and used the same record book till 1713. The purchasers in April made a grant of a full purchase right in their lands, to Mr. Clark, the agent of the colony.



1663.—The General Election this year was holden at Providence.

Benedict Arnold was elected President,  
 William Field, Assistant for Providence,  
 William Baulstone, “ for Portsmouth,  
 Richard Tew, “ for Newport,  
 John Greene, “ for Warwick.

Joseph Torrey, General Recorder, James Rogers, General Sergeant, John Sanford, General Treasurer, John Easton, General Attorney, Richard Bulgar, General Solicitor.

The Commissioners from Providence were,  
 William Field, Thomas Harris,  
 Thomas Olney, Arthur Fenner,  
 William Carpenter, James Ashton.

No business of a public nature was transacted at this court. Another court was holden at Portsmouth October 14.

The following were Commissioners from Providence :

William Field, William Harris,  
 William Carpenter, Edward Thurston,  
 Zachary Rhodes, Joseph Torrey.

Letters were received from Mr. Clarke, and measures taken at this court for a further supply of money to him.

In April, George Sheppard, one of the received inhabitants of Providence, gave the town all his lands on the West of the seven-mile line, to be appropriated to the support of Weybosset Bridge. This was indeed a generous donation. But little is known of the donor—which may be accounted for, by perusing the following letter.



To the Town of Providence:

Loving friends and neighbors—I make bold to declare myself in way of satisfaction to those offended for my not acting in your town-meetings.

1. I desire you to understand, that it is not in opposition unto civil government, for I own it, in a way of order, as an ordinance of GOD, unto which I am bound to submit, but, in regard of my unfitness of acting, considering the infirmities of my body, as also of capacity to undertake such weighty affairs; therefore, shall rather submit unto your wholesome orders than be an unfit actor therein.

2. By your order, I understand, you have disvoted me, and shall submit unto your pleasure therein, not any way opposing, conceiving your wisdom to order for the best, in such public affairs.

3. For what land you were pleased to bestow upon me, I am bound to thank you for your free love therein, but be pleased to know, that it was not for land that I came hither, but the enjoying of my conscience; therefore, if any be offended at the quantity of that gift and also of my acceptance, being advised thereto by friends, I do most willingly surrender it unto you again, desiring that you would be pleased, if it might be inoffensive, to bestow upon me a smaller quantity, according to your custom, for the which I shall acknowledge myself much engaged unto you; otherwise you will expose me to think upon a removal where I may enjoy my freedom; but I hope you will take my condition into your serious consideration, that I may partake of that liberty, which, out of your tender care to consciences, you do hold forth, provided, as I desire not to be in any thing a disturber of your civil peace or order but a well wisher and submitter thereto.

GEORGE SHEPPARD.

There is no date to this letter, nor any further trace of the writer. But such sentiments, so unusual in any age or place, should be preserved.

At the annual election in June, Thomas Olney, jr. was chosen Town Clerk, Thomas Harris, sen. and John Brown, Town Deputies, Thomas Olney, sen. Treasurer. Roger Williams, Thomas Olney,



sen. and Arthur Fenner, to make up the Town Council.

In October, a rate of £36 was ordered to be assessed for Mr. Clark, which could be paid in wheat at four shillings and sixpence, in peas at three shillings and sixpence, per bushel, or in butter at six pence per pound.

Among the papers on file in the city clerk's office, is an original warrant from the General Sergeant, addressed to the warden or deputy warden of Providence, dated the fourteenth day of November, requiring him to call a town meeting, to elect commissioners, or send those already elected, to meet at Newport on the 24th of that month, "partly and chiefly to receive the charter which is certainly reported to be arrived."

It seems that the chief officer in the several towns had different titles. In this warrant he is styled, warden; sometimes he is called the head officer. The general assistant was the officer intended. He issued the warrants for convening town meetings. The warrant from the general sergeant was followed by the following one from the president of the colony.

"To the Captain, or other commission officers of the Town of Providence. You are, in his Majesty's name, required to warn and require all the freemen of your town to accompany your town commissioners, in their arms, on the 24th day of November instant, being Tuesday, or as many as can come, to Newport, there to solemnize the receipt of the charter, according to advice of the colony's agent to the council.

Hereof fail not. Given November 16th, 1663.

By BEN. ARNOLD, President.

For the Town of Providence."



A town meeting was holden on the 16th day of November, and the following named persons were chosen commissioners on this occasion :

William Field,	Zachary Rhodes,
Roger Williams,	William Harris,
William Carpenter,	Stephen Arnold.

It appears that neither Mr. Williams nor Mr. Arnold attended this court, and as in other like cases, the commissioners filled the vacancies by electing other freemen of the colony. In this case, Richard Tew, and Joseph Torrey, were elected. The town declined sending any soldiers on this occasion. The commissioners met on the day appointed. The box containing the charter was produced by Captain Baxter, the bearer of it, in what is called in the record, "a very great assembly of the people." "It was then resolved," so says the record, "that the box in which the king's gracious letters were enclosed, be opened, and the letters with the broad seal thereto affixed, be taken forth and read by Captain George Baxter, in the audience and view of all the people ; which was accordingly done, and the said letters, with his majesty's royal stamp and the broad seal, with much beseeming gravity, held up on high and presented to the perfect view of the people, and so returned into the box, and locked up by the Governor in order to the safe keeping." The most humble thanks of the colony were directed to be returned to his majesty "for the high and inestimable, yea incomparable grace and favor"—"to the Honorable Earl of Clarendon, Lord High Chancellor of England, for his exceeding great care and love unto



the colony"—to Mr. Clark, with a gratuity of one hundred pounds—and also a gratuity to Captain Baxter, of twenty-five pounds. The court of commissioners assembled again the next day, and after passing such resolutions and orders as were necessary to prevent the failure of justice, "dissolve and resign up the present government."

The Governor and Assistants named in the charter assembled on the same day. They directed a General Assembly to be holden on the first Tuesday in March, and required that until then, all the officers in the colony, both civil and military, should proceed and execute their respective duties.

Thus closed the government of the colony under the charter of 1644. When that charter was received, it was hailed with the most enthusiastic expressions of joy, for it conferred on the inhabitants a political existence, and was a sure pledge of the protection of the mother country. It conferred unequalled privileges and powers on the colonists, the very extent of which, rendered the government to be established under it, wanting in energy. In effect, the four towns remained almost independent of each other, and the colonial government acted not so much upon the individuals who composed the colony, as upon the corporate towns of the confederacy. We have traced the difficulties and dissensions that sprang up under this charter in all parts of the colony, and the legitimate conclusion seems to be, that nothing but the pressure of external dangers, could have held the colony together, so long, under it. Upon the restoration of the monarchy and



the accession of Charles to the throne of his ancestors, this colony had much to fear. The very acceptance of their former charter, must have subjected them to great suspicions of disloyalty. The active part taken by their agent Mr. Williams, while in England in 1643, and 1648, his known and acknowledged intimacy with Cromwell and Sir Henry Vane, must have increased these suspicions. While, on the other hand, the high ground that the colony had ever taken and sustained in the cause not of religious toleration, but of perfect religious liberty, must have rendered it, in no small degree obnoxious to the clergy of the church of England, who, from being the persecuted, had now acquired the power of becoming the persecuting party. They must have looked upon the inhabitants, of this colony as schismatics of no ordinary character, the very dregs of the Independent and Presbyterian faction, whose hand they had felt to be the "heavy, wrathful hand of an unbrotherly and unchristian persecutor."

But the colony had long ere this adopted the anchor for its seal, and "Hope" for its motto. It was not appalled by the number or malignancy of its opponents, and by the indefatigable exertions of its agent, Mr. Clark, surmounted all these obstacles, and received from the king the charter which was continued as the basis of the state government, until the adoption of the State Constitution in 1843. The provisions of this charter are believed to be so well known as to make it unnecessary here to recite them. In relation, however, to the great leading principle of the colony, religious liberty, it must be



observed, that this charter does not entrench upon it in the least. The laws of England at that time, required uniformity in religious belief. They recognized a church establishment as a part of the government of the kingdom. This charter recites, that the address of the colony by their agent had declared the wish of the colonists to prove by their acts, "that a flourishing civil state may stand and best be maintained, with full liberty in religious concerns."

The grant, in the charter, is in effect, that no person shall be "called in question for any differences in opinion in matters of religion," any law of the realm to the contrary notwithstanding; thus repealing the general law of the kingdom, so far as the king had the power to do it, in respect to these petitioners, or rather excepting them from the operation of these laws. This course left the colonists exactly where their original compact and the charter of 1644 left them, with no human laws regulating their religious faith or practice, or conferring on them the right to think and act for themselves in religious concerns.

In reviewing the history of Providence up to this period, the most casual observer must be struck with two remarkable circumstances that distinguish it from the neighboring colonies. They were all originated by one common cause, religious intolerance; they were all established for one common end, religious freedom. While Providence ever disclaimed all power, except in civil things, the other colonies asserted and sometimes exercised an ecclesiastical jurisdiction not warranted by reason or religion. Again,



the first settlers of Providence recognised the Aboriginal as the paramount title to the land on which they planted, and purchased it before they made any settlement. On the other hand, the other colonies claimed possession of their plantations, in the first instance, by virtue of patents or grants from the King of England, and fortified the right so acquired by subsequent purchases of the natives.



## CHAPTER THIRD.

### GENERAL HISTORY.

FROM THE ADOPTION OF THE COLONY CHARTER, OF 1663, UNTIL 1763.

The adoption, by the colony, of the new charter, seems to have been considered not only as a total abrogation of the one that preceded it, but as invalidating, in some degree, the charters granted under it to the several towns. It may well be doubted, whether the colonial government possessed the power of granting such charters. If they had that power, the repeal of the colony charter could not affect them. Doubts however must have existed on this point, for the town of Providence at their town meeting in June 1664, ordered, that "the first Monday in June be the day of electing our town officers, and for that day to continue, yearly." Now this was the day appointed in the town's charter for the election of town officers. The General Assembly, at a session in March, passed an act prescribing what officers should be elected by each town. This power, by the town charters, was vested in the towns alone. The officers directed to be chosen, were, a town council, clerk, constable and sergeant. The council of each town was to consist of six persons of whom the assistants residing in each town, were ex-officio, members. It is difficult to conceive what advantage, either colony or town could derive from this arrange-



ment. Of the Governor, deputy Governor and ten Assistants, five were to be chosen from Newport, three from Providence, two from Portsmouth and two from Warwick. The town of Providence had, therefore, the choice of only three of their town council, the other three being chosen by the freemen of the state. At the October session of the General Assembly a tax of £600 was ordered; of this Providence was to pay £100, Newport £285, Portsmouth £30, Warwick £80, Pettaquamscutt £20, Block-Island £15. Colony taxes will be occasionally noticed hereafter, as affording some evidence of the comparative wealth of the different towns, at different times. In December a town tax of £130 was ordered to be assessed to pay the town's proportion of this colony tax. This was made payable "in wheat at four shillings and six-pence per bushel, peas at three shillings and six-pence, pork at £3,10 per barrel, or horses or cattle equivalent." It seems that the bridge at Weybossett needed repairs in the beginning of 1665. A committee was appointed in January to solicit subscriptions for repairing it.

In July 1665, all New-England was filled with fears and dismay by the arrival of the King's commissioners, Col. Richard Nichols, Sir Robert Carr, Knight, George Cartwright, Esq. and Samuel Maverick, Esq. They were empowered to hear and determine all complaints and appeals, in all causes, as well military, as civil and criminal, and to provide for and settle the peace and security of the country. Their commission was very ample and their powers extraordinary. They were not however called upon



to exercise them, in any way affecting the town of Providence.

It appears by the records that two meetings were holden on the first Monday in June, 1667, for the election of town officers, and two sets of officers chosen. The causes of this proceeding are not known. Probably it arose out of the disputes about the extent of the town bounds, the effect of deeds procured from the Natives in 1659 and 1662, and the dividing line between Providence and Pawtuxet proprietries, which at that time and for years before and after afforded copious matter for dissention.— These points, and also the disputes between Providence, Warwick and Westquanoid will be particularly noticed in a subsequent chapter. It was the duty of one of the assistants to call town meetings, but of which one, does not appear. The assistants residing in Providence this year, were William Carpenter, William Harris and Arthur Fenner. One of these town meetings was called by Arthur Fenner, the other, probably, by William Harris. After the two elections were completed, a complaint was made to the Governor against Mr. Fenner, which resulted in a special session of the General Assembly in July. At this session two sets of deputies were returned, chosen at two distinct town meetings. The deputies chosen at the town meeting called by Arthur Fenner, were admitted to their seats. At this session Mr. Harris preferred an indictment against Arthur Fenner and the deputies elected at his town meeting, for a rout. They were acquitted after a trial and the General Assembly proceeded and im-



posed a fine of £50 on Mr. Harris, for procuring the assembly to be called without sufficient cause. He was deposed from his office of Assistant and another elected in his stead. The General Assembly afterwards, in October 1668, remitted the fine. At the annual town meeting, the town appointed a committee consisting of Arthur Fenner, John Throckmorton, Thomas Hopkins and Shadrach Manton to draw up a statement to be sent to the other towns. There is no copy of this statement on record, the following extracts are made from the copy sent to Warwick. It is entitled "The Firebrand discovered, in a brief narrative or remonstrance to the three towns in this colony of Rhode-Island and Providence Plantations, viz: Newport, Portsmouth and Warwick, declaring both his name, nature, qualities and conditions, as appeareth by some of his former and later actions in this town and colony." After detailing at some length and with no measured terms of dispraise, his conduct on certain occasions, they proceed to the following narrative of events that transpired on election day.

"His actions amongst us the 3d of this instant June, being the day of this town's electing of town officers, maketh this Firebrand further appear, who with his partner, William Carpenter, deprived a great number of freemen of liberty to vote for officers. Some of them had been townsmen twenty-six years, all above eighteen years of age, and landed men, and had given their engagement of fidelity to his majesty, according as is provided in the colony. The objection why they should not vote was, they had not given their engagements before the town; then one steps forth and desireth to give his engagement, then, that, also they refused. Another objection, their names were not returned to the clerk, then the assistant tendered a list of those names to be



recorded, that had given their engagements ; that was also refused, so, that this man, with his partner, would neither accept them that were engaged, nor let him engage that offered himself, be-  
free them ; what they would have, we now begin to see. The people beholding their liberties and privileges, by these men, endeavored to be violated and destroyed, being about two parts out of three resolved not to endure it ; but moved Mr. Fenner, Assistant, to stand with them to help maintain their privilege, and to work they went, to the business of the day, to choose their moderator in the same room, the town clerk and constable ; and when they were engaged, demanded the town books to be delivered to the town clerk, chosen by the major part of the freemen of the town. This man with his associates, having got the table, denied the books. The said Arthur Fenner, moderator, in the name of the town demanded them, three distinct times, and one of them dared the company to touch the books. But we dared to do it, only we did know, it would but add fuel to the firebrand, which would do no good, neither to colony nor town ; remembering that our [illegible] is watched for roundabout us, and chose at present, another way, procured paper, recorded our act and officers, completing the business of the day (as in respect to the election) and chose four men to draw this remonstrance to the three towns, that, if be possible this firebrand may be quenched. Moreover, this man, whilst we were peaceably acting, his associates having left the room, came again and commanded the said moderator of the town, about ten times, in his majesty's name, to depart that house from the rout ; so that with us the case lieth thus, that when we meet together in peace to agree about our occasions, not warned by this man or his partner, we are called by him a rout, and when warned by them and do not, as this man would have us, we are then also termed a rout. What other fiery work this man will make, we watch to see, that we may quench it if it be possible. But by this time, we suppose, you will be ready to question as Ahasuerus did to the Queen Esther, who is he that durst presume in his heart to do so ; we answer, with Esther, the Adversary, the Enemy, the Firebrand is this wicked Harris, commonly called William Harris, this is his name."



There was a degree of propriety in thus addressing the other towns in the colony, if the facts stated were true, because Mr. Harris held his office of assistant by the votes of the freemen of all the towns, and in virtue of his office as assistant, he was empowered to perform certain acts and duties in the town in which he resided. Although the instrument from which the foregoing extract is made, emanated under the authority of the town, and was, by their direction, disseminated through the colony, it ought to be classed among the effusions of party. The language throughout, and even its very title, shows that it was written under such an excitement of feelings, as is always unfavorable even to a perception of exact truth

Weybosset Bridge even in the infancy of its erection, seems to have been the source of much trouble and the cause of great expenditure. Being out of repair, the town not succeeding in their attempts to collect sufficient money for its support by voluntary contributions, the following proposition was made by Roger Williams in relation to it.

Providence, 10th Feb. 1667-S.

Loving friends and neighbors.--Unto this day it pleased the town to adjourn for the answering of the bill for the bridge and others. I have conferred with Shadrach Manton and Nathaniel Waterman about their proposal and their result is, that they cannot obtain such a number as will join with them to undertake the bridge upon the hope of meadow. I am, therefore, bold, after so many anchors come home, and so much trouble and long debate and deliberations, to offer, that, if you please, I will, with GOD'S help, take this bridge unto my care and by that moderate toll of strangers of all sorts which hath been mentioned, will



maintain it so long as it pleaseth GOD that I live in this town.

2. The town shall be free from all toll, only, I desire one day's work of one man in a year from every family, but from those that have teams and have much use of the bridge, one day's work of a man and team, and of those that have less use, half a day.

3. I shall join with any of the town, more or few, who will venture their labor with me for the gaining of meadow.

4. I promise, that if it please GOD that I gain meadow in equal value to the town's yearly help, I shall then release that.

5. I desire, if it please GOD to be with me to go through such charge and trouble as will be, to bring this to a settled way and then suddenly to take me from hence, I desire, that before another, my wife and children, if they desire it, may engage in my stead to these conditions.

6. If the town please to consent, I desire that one of yourselves be nominated, to join with the clerk to draw up the writing.

R. W.

Upon receipt of this proposal the town voted, that Mr. Williams "may receive toll of all strangers who pass over Wapwaysett Bridge and of townsmen what they are free to give, toward the support of said bridge." This does not appear like disinterested legislation on the subject. It remained a toll bridge till 1672, when the grant to Mr. Williams was repealed. The General Assembly, afterwards in various years, made large grants toward the reparation of this bridge.

Notwithstanding the remonstrance which the town circulated in the summer of 1667, the same assistants for Providence were re-elected in May following. This circumstance in connection with continuing difficulties gave rise to the following remonstrance in August 1668.



“ To the honored Governor and council at Newport on Rhode Island.

The humble remonstrance and petition of the town of Providence, orderly assembled together, Humbly sheweth, That having been informed that William Harris, notwithstanding William Carpenter's offer, is resolved to pursue his charge of a riot against so many of our honest and innocent neighbors, we have thought it our duty, being orderly met according to law, for the honor of truth and the honor of his Majesty's loyal and peaceable subjects, now most unjustly and miserably oppressed, to present these few lines to your prudent consideration. First, as to the accusers, Second, as to the accusation and the accused.

First as to the accusers. First. All of them jointly, William Carpenter, William and Thomas Harris, they pretend his Majesty's name and service, but it is but a mantle or cloak to private ends. For there are many evidences, some while since given in to our honored Assistant of this colony, of their treacherous profession, and we justly suspect, practices, of their treacherous minds, against his Majesty's gracious charter and authority in this colony and the government and liberties of it, all of which evidences, you may please to command the sight of.

Secondly. As to one of them and the incendiary of this and many other troubles in town and colony, William Harris, he now forceth us to remember, that it is about twenty four years since he was disfranchised and cast out of the assembly of his neighbors in town meeting for assaulting a neighbor and blood shedding in the King's highway, in the street and for the furious maintaining of such a practice. 'Tis true he hath thrust himself oft into our meetings, though some have protested against it, and so he did in our last year's trouble; but, the truth is, he intruded and usurped, for he was never orderly received in again, since his disfranchisement upon record. Since that time he hath lived in the woods until the year 1656 or thereabout, and as some of his friends have often said, like another Nebuchadnezzar, not fit for the society of men; where, while others spent themselves to uphold town and colony, by means of a mare got for a meadow the town gave him, he got some horses, and he lay barking at and biting, as he could, both town and colony. But in that year aforesaid, he brake forth with an open flag of defiance under his



hand, writing to the four towns of the colony, against all civil government, professing that it would shortly be, that people should cry out, "No Lords, No Masters," saying, "That the house of Saul, grew weaker and weaker," which he all along in his books, interprets to be civil governors and governments, "and the house of David" that is William Harris and his saints "stronger and stronger." His book is yet extant and traitorously vomits out his filth against all governments and governors, of what rank soever, all lords and masters, against all laws and law-making assemblies, against all courts, all punishments, prisons, rules, all records, as thieves, robbers, hypocrites, satyrs, owls, courts of owls, dragons and devils and soldiers, legions of devils. What were the proceedings of this colony against all these his horrid practices, our records declare, he openly protesting before the country here at Newport, that he had nothing to lose, but an old coat for the hangman, and he would maintain his writings with his blood; and for ought we have heard, the colony never discharged him from the charge exhibited against him. Since that time, upon hope of great lordship of land, he hath tacked about, licked up his vomit, adored like Saul, as some have told him, the witch at Endor, the laws and courts and charter which before, he damned and turned his former traitorous practices into ten years vexatious plaguing and tormenting both town and colony and the whole country, with law, law-suits and restless fires and flames of law contentions. We add to this, as some of our neighbors did in their character of him the last year, his tongue is as foul as his pen, with constant and loathsome revilings of all that cross him, fool, knave, rascal, jack-anapes, scoundrel, &c. None escape his dirt of reproach and threatening, nor some his challenges to fight, yea, with pistol and rapier, yea, even then, when he protested against all courts and weapons. It is not forgotten, that the General Assembly of this colony, this last year, sensible of his practices, passed a sharp sentence upon him, notwithstanding though it be impendent on him, as if he would dare the execution he proceeds in his furious tormenting of his poor neighbors with most unjust and causeless vexations; wherein as to the accusation.

1. The matter is about a spot of land, yeilding about three or four loads of hay, as the year is.



2. The claim of this spot, was got for his son Andrew in a deceitful way, against the protests of Mr. Field, Mr. Olney, Mr. Carpenter, himself and the rest of the purchasers, he forcing in a company upon them to whom he would give land. His carriage then, was such, that Mr. Field was forced to charge the constable to keep the peace. This spot was since laid out by the major consent of the purchasers to Resolved Waterman, who offering in a legal way to try the title and peaceably cutting it off, he and his neighbors are now thus oppressed, as rebels against his Majesty.

3. Andrew Harris confessed to Mr. Greene, Assistant, that Resolved Waterman used no force, only he had cut his meadow, which amounts to no more in law, than common actional cases, and the warrant of William Harris, given to his extraordinary constable Thomas Harris, to apprehend Resolved Waterman for a Riot, we judge void in law, also he standing a delinquent many ways upon record, and therefore was most justly refused by our governor to be by him engaged or sworn to be a magistrate, to which it is true he had an inconsiderate vote from his unadvised party on the island, to the great grievance of the towns on the main, on whom the island party would force him

4. We herewith present you with a copy of the town's mind and request, prepared and ordered a month since, to be presented to the General Assembly, being a petition for redress against these oppressions, where, ordinary actional and petty matters, are by subtle quirks from old statutes, without reference to our laws and indulgence by his majesty's gracious charter to us, wound and screwed up to an high crime against his majesty, whose name is most abominably abused for private ends.

5. Mr. Greene, Assistant, solemnly sent for by themselves, after long debate declared, that he found no riot, nor any force in the whole carriage, nor no uncivil or unbecoming carriage in Providence men now thus unjustly charged.

In consideration of the premises, we humbly pray,

First. That you will please to stop such shameful abuse of his majesty's name and authority, and such shameful oppression of his majesty's loyal and peaceable subjects.

Secondly. That your honored selves will please to assist our humble petition to the next General Assembly, that Mr. Carpen-



ter, William and Thomas Harris, who have thus shamefully abused his majesty's name and oppressed his subjects, be rendered incapable to be chosen to any further public employment, until they have given public satisfaction and be orderly released from such a sentence.

Thirdly. That the sentence of the General Assembly against William Harris, be no longer protracted, for all men see, that indulgence and lenity is but as oil poured upon his fiery, contentious spirit, which makes him flame the higher.

Fourthly. We pray your countenance and assistance to the General Solicitor to proceed legally with William Carpenter, William and Thomas Harris for their treacherous speeches, and, we suspect, actions, against his majesty's gracious charter, and the liberties and government and privileges which it hath pleased our God and the king, to the envy and astonishment of all our neighborhood, so wonderfully to bestow upon us,

Your most humble servants and petitioners,

SHADRACH MANTON, Town Clerk,

in the name and at the appointment of the town of Providence.  
Providence, 31st of August, 1668.

For some years after the granting of the charter of 1663, there existed a warm dispute between this colony and the colony of Connecticut in relation to the dividing line between them. In some stage of this dispute, which was finally settled by the king in council, William Harris acted as the agent or attorney of Connecticut. There is in the possession of the Rhode-Island Historical Society, the heads of an argument on this subject drawn up by Mr. Harris, and indorsed by him "This is the copy of that for which I was imprisoned and tried for my life."

It was probably the part he took in this controversy that provoked the remarks in the first part of this remonstrance. The circumstances that occasioned his disfranchisement in 1644, cannot be ascertained.



The only evidence of the fact, exists in this remonstrance, and in the one sent the year before to the other towns in the colony. The records of the town at the period alluded to are lost. It is not known that he ever denied the fact, or that he left any explanation of the circumstance. The promulgation of certain opinions of his in 1656, subjected him to an indictment for high treason against the government of England. This it seems was not prosecuted.

That Mr. Harris was elected an Assistant by the colony in 1668, after he had, the year before, been deposed from that office and fined for misconduct, affords reason to believe that all the blame was not on his side, and his subsequent re-election to the same office in 1669, proves that a majority of the freemen of the colony still adhered to him. Party spirit, all history shows, will cover up a multitude of sins, but it is difficult to believe that it would have been sufficient to sustain Mr. Harris, if all the charges against him were true to their utmost extent. It is matter of deep regret that he left no statement in relation to these circumstances.

In June 1667, the town treasurer reported, that he had neither received nor paid any thing for the town, the year preceding. The fact is noticed, simply for its singularity. The like probably never occurred before, and if it has since, it certainly has not recently. Though the record shows no such proceeding, it is presumed that the town in 1668 and 1669 elected two sets of town officers, as in 1667. At the October session of the General Assembly, 1669, two certificates from two town clerks were



presented in relation to the election of deputies. One certified that there had been no election and the other contained the names of four persons who had been chosen to that office. This circumstance induced the Assembly to pass an act of which the following is the preamble.

“The General Assembly, sadly resenting the grievous symptoms that appear of the dangerous contests, distractions and divisions amongst our ancient, loving and honored neighbors, the freemen, inhabitants of the town of Providence, whereby the said town is rendered in an incapacity of transacting their own affairs in any measure of satisfactory order with peace and quietness, and, consequently, unable to help in the managing and ordering of public affairs by deputies that ought to be by them sent to the General Assembly, and jurymen to the courts of trials, whereby there is, or seems to be, a breach in the whole; upon consideration whereof, and upon finding that the cause of the foresaid inconveniences, ariseth from disagreement and dissatisfaction about divisions and dispositions of lands, wherein, it is impossible either party can be clear from giving and taking occasion of offence, and that it is altogether unlikely they will compose the difference without some judicious men and unconcerned in the premised contest be helpful by their counsel and advice to that end,”

Therefore they appointed Messrs. John Easton, Joshua Coggeshall, John Coggeshall, William Vaughan and John Sanford, to proceed to Providence, and meet the inhabitants in general meeting, “and endeavor to persuade them to a loving composition of their differences;” also to call a meeting of freemen for the election of town officers and deputies. The assembly adjourned to the third Tuesday in February to ascertain the result of this interference, and in the mean time stayed all proceed-



ings in all indictments and actions that had grown out of those differences. This committee were unsuccessful in their attempts to restore peace and unanimity. On the twenty-second day of March following the General Assembly were again called on to interfere in the premises, and they then passed the following act :

“It being so, that there have been great distractions amongst the inhabitants of the town of Providence, there being two parties accusing each other, that they have obstructed legal proceedings and that they have acted illegally, so that the General Assembly of this colony has not been assisted by them with deputies, neither is this General Assembly, although there have been long endeavors by General Assemblies, that the inhabitants of Providence themselves might have issued their differences that have caused such obstructions, but it not taking place,

Be it enacted by this General Assembly, that two men be chosen, and authorized and required, to take what intelligence they can, how many and who they are of the town of Providence that are free inhabitants of this colony, and have and do take the engagement to be true subjects to the king, and that all those which either party will not own to be freemen of the colony and to have engaged allegiance to the king, except the two men above get intelligence any are free, although they be not so owned by the other party, they shall, at their peril to be taken as rioters, forbear to vote in the election of any to any office in civil government in this colony ; and the two men chose shall require whom they see cause to warn all of Providence that are such freemen of this colony as aforesaid to appear at time and place as the two men chosen shall appoint for those that so appear, by the major vote, to choose their moderator and town officers for the time being and until the day for their yearly choice according to their law, and that they also in the same meeting, choose their deputies for the next General Assembly, that is to set in May next, 1670.

Mr. John Easton and Mr. Joshua Coggeshall are nominated and appointed to be the two men to put the aforesaid order in



execution, and Ensign Lot Strange and Joseph Torrey are added unto them for counsel and advice in the matter, and are all to repair to the town of Providence, with all convenient speed, after the court is dissolved."

A town meeting was called by this committee on the second day of April, at which an election was made. The officers appear to have been selected from both parties. This year, Mr. Harris was not elected an assistant. The assistants for Providence were William Carpenter, Roger Williams and Thomas Olney. Of a colony tax of £300, £57 was assessed on Providence. In ordering this tax, the distinction is made between New-England currency and sterling.—Forty shillings New-England are declared equal to thirty shillings sterling. In assessing this tax on individuals the proportion of William Harris was three pounds ten shillings, of William Carpenter, two pounds ten shillings, of Roger Williams, ten shillings.

In August 1672, Mr. Williams had his famous public dispute with three Friends, John Stubbs, John Burnycat and William Edmonson. It continued through three days at Newport, and was then adjourned to Providence, where it occupied another day. As on such occasions generally, neither party was convinced, both claimed the victory and both were more firmly fixed in their former opinions. The challenge went from Mr. Williams and was intended particularly for George Fox, but he had left Rhode-Island before Mr. Williams' letter reached there. Before he left, he sent a curious communication to Thomas Olney, jr. and John Whipple, jr. at Providence, in relation to the rights and liberties of



the town and people. This was answered at great length by Mr. Olney, and with a degree of acrimony which the communication from George Fox does not seem to require. It appears from the answer of Mr. Olney, that the government of the colony was then in the hands of Friends.

Deputies were not required, until October 1672, to take any oath, affirmation, or engagement, on entering on their duties. It was required at this session, to the great dissatisfaction of the good people of Providence, who protested against it. They said "it is contrary to the liberties granted to us in our charter, our charter not binding us to any such thing, and many persons scrupling such impositions to be imposed on them" and they, therefore, declare against it for the "reasons showed and many more that may be." Perhaps it would have been well for the remonstrants to have set down some of the other "reasons" that they could have given against such a law. These might have rendered their remonstrance more conclusive than the reasons given. The law of 1647, vesting the probate of wills and the settling of the estates of deceased persons in the head officer of each town, was repealed at this session and the same power conferred on the town councils. They have continued from that time to the present to exercise that jurisdiction.—The disadvantages and evils resulting from different modes of proceeding in different towns and from a real or seeming contrariety in the decisions of different tribunals are more than counterbalanced by the facility with which the business is accomplished.



We are now approaching a period in the history of New-England, which was fraught with danger and suffering. We allude to the war with the Natives, commonly called Philip's War. It will be necessary in order to understand the causes of this war, to recur to some earlier portions of history. Soon after the settlement of Plymouth, Massasoiet, sachem of the Wampanoags, submitted himself and lands to the English, and concluded with them a treaty, offensive and defensive. It has before been suggested, that one of his objects might have been, to free himself and tribe from the ascendancy which the Narragansetts, in the time of the great sickness, acquired over them. Before the sickness, the Wampanoags were a very powerful nation. They were the constant rivals, and considered themselves the natural enemies, of the Narragansetts. The treaty thus concluded, assured them the protection of the English against the Narragansetts. For this reason it was inviolably observed by Massasoiet during his life. After his death, Alexander, the eldest of his sons, succeeded him. He with his brother Philip renewed the treaty with Plymouth, but it was soon suspected that he designed to shake off his subjection to the English. Under the fostering wing of Plymouth, the Wampanoags had in part recovered their former strength, for during the life of Massasoiet they were engaged in no war with any of the tribes around them. Alexander increased his power by an intermarriage with Weetamo, squaw sachem of the Pocassets, who is described as being "as potent a prince as any round about her." Dr. I.



Mather says that "Alexander was not so faithful a friend to the English as his father had been." He had not the same inducement to be so. His tribe, with the confederate Pocassetts, believed they were able to protect themselves against the Narragansetts, without foreign assistance, and probably they began to be jealous of the growing power and numbers of the English. Some of Boston informed Gov. Prence of Plymouth that "he was contriving mischief against the English and had solicited the Narragansetts to engage with him in his designed rebellion." He denied the charge and promised to attend the next court at Plymouth for their satisfaction and his own vindication. The court passed and he did not appear, but went, as it would seem, to the Narragansetts, of whom he had before spoken, as his enemies. He excused his neglect to appear at the court, by saying that he was waiting for the return of Captain Willet, who was then absent, in order to speak with him first. The excuse was not satisfactory, and an armed force was sent after him. He was taken prisoner and carried before some of the magistrates of Plymouth. Either while there or within a few days after he was permitted to return home, he was taken sick with a fever and died shortly after. This is the statement of the English. Philip and Weetamo always said that Alexander was poisoned by the English. I have not been able to ascertain the time of his capture or death. It was not however long after the date of his deed to Providence, which will be given in a subsequent chapter. Nor are the writers of those days very explicit as to any



overt acts done by Alexander against his allies and fellow subjects. Were it not for the fatal catastrophe which followed and the foul imputation cast upon his captors by the Natives, it might be suspected that the execution of this very deed, was "the head and front of his offending." That deed might be construed as injuriously affecting the claims that "some of Boston" were then setting up to a part of the Narragansett country, which appears to have been claimed as belonging to the Wampanoags.

The death of Alexander delayed the war, if any was intended. The circumstances under which his death took place according to the accounts of the English, would naturally tend to create distrust in his subjects. They looked on him as a sovereign prince. They construed his submission to the king of England, in the same light in which he probably viewed it, as a treaty merely, an agreement to maintain peace and amity with the subjects of the king of England inhabiting his dominions with his consent. To see such a personage seized by an armed force, within his own territories and among his own subjects, and compelled to answer to vague suspicions, derogatory to him as a chieftain, before a court of a private corporation, might well awaken in their breasts the most violent emotions. If however they believed the story which they circulated, that their prince had fallen a victim to poison administered by his allies and pretended friends, nothing could have restrained them from at once commencing a war of extermination but the hope of glutting their vengeance in a more signal manner on some future occasion.



Their hope of revenge was smothered and concealed for a season. Philip, who succeeded Alexander in the sachemdom, was as politic and sagacious as he was bold and intrepid. He had seen the Pequods exterminated, when they warred singly with the English, and he undoubtedly supposed, such would be the fate of his own tribe, if they engaged singly in the unequal struggle. He sought therefore by gifts, messengers and personal conference, to induce all the tribes near the English to join them, and by a general and simultaneous attack, to destroy all the plantations, at a single blow. He even went so far as to present the calumet to the Narragansetts, the ancient and natural enemies of his tribe, and to propose an union with them, the object of which should be to avenge the murder of Miantonomi and Alexander. He sedulously concealed his designs and movements from the English, and as often as requested renewed his treaties of peace and amity with them. He had so nearly completed his arrangements, as to fix the time when the mask of friendship should be laid aside, and the war whoop should resound in every plantation of the English. The time fixed, was the spring of 1676, but circumstances compelled him in June 1675, to throw off the disguise. At first the Wampanoags appeared to be alone, and, by them, town after town in Plymouth colony was destroyed. Philip seemed every where, leading his men to daring and successful enterprizes. The Wampanoags at the commencement of hostilities sent their wives and children to the Narragansetts; Canonchet, the chief sa-



them of the Narragansetts, was required to deliver them up to the English. "Not a Wampanoag, nor the paring of a Wampanoag's nail, shall be delivered up," was his reply. The tributary tribes of the Wampanoags and Narragansetts were aroused, but the English suffered much less than they would have done, had not Philip's original design of a simultaneous attack been frustrated. The final result of such a contest could not be doubted. The savage, however brave, can never successfully contend with the civilized. At the first, it was thought that Plymouth alone could cope with the Indians. But when the Narragansetts and other nations joined Philip in open war, the whole power of the united colonies was called into action. This colony, which had been denied the advantages of that confederation in time of peace, was not bound to take an active part in any war with the natives which they might provoke. Their local situation was such as to render an Indian war any thing but desirable, for they were surrounded by the most powerful tribes in New-England. At first therefore they only took measures for defence, and their settlements were left undisturbed.

The war raged with varied success through the summer and autumn of 1675. Many of the English settlements were entirely destroyed, and many Indian warriors fell before the weapons of their enemies. Philip took up his winter quarters with the Narragansetts. They had constructed a fort in South-Kingstown, which they deemed impregnable. Thither they conveyed their winter's stock of provis-



ion, their wives and their children. There the whole tribe was assembled. Preparations were made by the united colonies for a winter campaign against this fort. It was attacked on the 19th of December, and taken after a bloody fight in which a large proportion of its defenders were killed. Their winter provision was destroyed and the survivors left to find a scanty subsistence in the swamps, where they concealed themselves from the English. Instead of indulging in useless regrets or giving themselves up to despair, they planned new projects of revenge; the recollection of their defeat and their present sufferings adding tenfold vigor to their previous thirst for it.

The troops of the united colonies rested after the battle at the trading and garrison house of Richard Smith, near Wickford, and their wounded men were transported to the island of Rhode-Island. On their march into the Narragansett country they passed through Providence, where probably some volunteers were added to their numbers.

Until a few days before the fight, the Indians had committed no acts of violence within the colony of Rhode-Island and Providence Plantations. They then burnt Bull's garrison house, which was situated in South-Kingstown. On the other hand it does not appear that the English inhabitants of this colony, had taken an active part in offensive measures against the Indians, or even in defensive ones for their own protection. The result of that campaign rendered the situation of the main land towns precarious and alarming, in a high degree. Providence applied to the governor of the colony for assistance.



That they were urgent, to say the least of it, appears from the following letter from Governor Clark. It contains the only evidence that any application was made.

Newport, this 23th day 12 mo. 1675—6. (Jan. 23, 1676.)  
Captain Fenner with the rest concerned, Friends,

I thought to present you with my information of your evil suggestions concerning us in authority, especially myself, as if not worthy to live, and since opportunity suits, am willing to expostulate a little with you, being a man that desires the weal of this colony and of every individual person, as my own, and knows not that just occasion has been given on our parts, though discontent in your spirits has risen, because your desires were not answered, as to supply of men; which were our desires you should have had, and sufficient order was given to effect the premises, but by reason of the weather, and what happened, was obstructed or neglected, but not by us as will appear. But I am satisfied you have not been thereby damnified, by reason the charge of soldiers for wages, ammunition and diet would have eaten you and us quite up, and no advantage by it. We judging yourselves in a capacity to secure your persons, and, for your out-houses, we never had hopes to secure. Besides, you have been exempted from rates and impositions which the island expended, eight hundred pounds, partly for the end you might have relief, and, to deal plainly with you, we are not of ability to keep soldiers under pay, having not provision, as bread, neither are you. Therefore, what you can secure by your own people is best, and what you cannot secure is best to be transported hither for security, for we have no hopes, but sorrows will increase and time will wear you out, and if men lie upon you, their charge will be more than your profit, twice told. And further, my advice is unto you, seek not help from other colonies, lest it be your utter ruin by being made prey of, and what you have, eaten and made a prey of, and your concerns never the better, as witness their whole proceedings; and not only so, but you hazard yourselves and estates, if any, to them that shall have power to question you, for it evidently appears, the confederate



colonies cannot support themselves and friends. I can better bear what I hear, remembering the old proverb, that the losers should have leave to speak, but ought to be within the bounds of reason. I know your losses have been great and your exercises many, which do and may exasperate to passionate words, yet men should keep within the bounds of reason, lest what they threaten others with, fall upon themselves; and if reports are true, we have not deserved such reproach, and, I can truly say, I have done to the uttermost of my ability for your good, and do and shall do, yet we know the Lord's hand is against New-England, and no weapon formed will or shall prosper till the work be finished, by which the wheat is pulled up with the tares and the innocent suffer with the guilty. I should be heartily glad that any way for your good and safety did present or that you would propound some way effectual for your good.

Farewell,                      WALTER CLARK.

The matter was agitated before the General Assembly in March and the following act passed.

“Voted to the free inhabitants of Providence and Warwick there remaining greeting.

Whereas, the present troubles with the Natives, are and have been great, very hazardous and prejudicial to the Inhabitants of this colony, the sense of which, upon the hearts of the Governor and Council, hath occasioned the calling of this present Assembly, who have a true commiseration of your calamities, and really sympathize your exercises and own ourselves so nearly related to you and in duty bound for the good of his Majesty's interest, and it is our study how to do or act for your safety in all respects. We received a paper from you of Warwick, as we suppose, but no hand subscribed, the contents of which we take to be the substance of your minds, and favorably construe the omission, by reason of your hurries and exercises as aforesaid. And since this meeting convened the 13th inst. was and is on purpose to advise for the good and weal of this colony, as is above said, after our serious debate and well weighing your hazardous and present condition; We declare, that we find this colony not of ability to maintain sufficient garrisons for the se-



curity of our out plantations, therefore, think and judge it most safe for the inhabitants to repair to this island, which is most secure. Newport and Portsmouth inhabitants have taken such care, that those of the colony that come and cannot procure land to plant for themselves and families' relief, may be supplied with land by the towns, and each family so wanting ability, shall have a cow kept upon the commons. But, if any of you think yourselves of ability to keep your interests of houses and cattle and will adventure your lives, we shall not positively oppose you therein; but this the Assembly declare, as their sense and real belief concerning the premises, that those that do so make themselves a prey, and what they have, as goods, provisions, ammunition, cattle &c. will be a relief to the enemy, except more than ordinary Providence prevent, therefore, cannot but judge them the wisest, that take the safest course to secure themselves and take occasion from the enemy."

Neither Providence nor Warwick could have felt flattered by the care bestowed upon them by the General Assembly. They were, as parts of the colony, entitled to protection so far as the general means would afford it. The resolution that the colony was not of sufficient ability to protect "out plantations" would hardly reach the case. It was rather ungenerous thus to style the oldest town in the colony, even if a younger sister had outstripped her in population and wealth. That however was more than atoned for by the kind offer made to the inhabitants of Providence and Warwick by the towns of Newport and Portsmouth. A large proportion of the inhabitants of Providence availed themselves of this offer and removed with their families and effects to the island of Rhode-Island. A list of those "that stayed and went not away" is preserved in the record of a subsequent town meeting. They were, Roger Williams, Nathaniel Waterman, Thomas



Fenner, Henry Ashton, John Morey, Daniel Abbott, James Olney, Valentine Whitman, John Whipple, sen., John Angell, James Angell, Thomas Arnold, Richard Pray, John Pray, Ephraim Pray, Abraham Man, Joseph Woodward, Thomas Field, Zachariah Field, Edward Bennett, Thomas Clemence, William Lancaster, William Hopkins, William Hawkins, John Rhodes, Samuel Windsor, Thomas Waller. It is presumed that the name of Arthur Fenner should have been in the above list. If this really includes all those who did not go to Rhode-Island for safety, the town was in fact nearly forsaken. It is not probable that the families of many of these remained with them. The language of the record is given above. There is nothing from which any tolerably correct estimate can be made of the number of inhabitants in Providence at the commencement of this war. If the number of polls between sixteen and sixty in 1686, only ten years after, amounted to nearly two hundred, it might be reasonable to suppose that Providence contained about the same number at this time, for it is well known that many who removed to the island never afterward returned to the main. The insular situation of Portsmouth and Newport rendered them quite secure, and free from danger. In addition to this, the colony employed four row-boats to be constantly employed on the look out around the Island to prevent any sudden invasion from the main. This navy, though small, rendered essential service to the colony.

The removal of so many of the inhabitants made Providence an easier prey to the Natives, while it in-



vited them to attack it, and on the 30th of March 1676, they burned thirty houses. It has always been supposed, that these were generally situated near the North part of the Town. The location of only one of them is known, and that was the house of John Smith the miller, which was on the west side of Moshassuck river, near to where the first stone lock of the Blackstone Canal is now located. Mr. Smith was, at that time, town clerk, and the records of the town were then in his possession. They were thrown from his burning house into the mill pond to preserve them from the flames, and to the present day they bear plenary evidence of the two-fold dangers they escaped, and the two-fold injury they suffered. After they were rescued from the mill pond they were carried to Newport, and were not returned again to Providence until after the war was at an end. In 1677, a committee consisting of four persons who had held the office of town clerk, were appointed to examine them and ascertain what was lost. They reported that sixty-five leaves of the first book and twenty of the second, besides other papers, were missing. At present many other parts of the books are illegible. The Town in 1796 appointed a committee consisting of Jabez Bowen, Moses Brown, Zephaniah Andrews, Benjamin Reynolds and the town clerk, George Tillinghast, to procure a copy of them to be made. It was done, after some delay, by Amos Hopkins. It would have been more valuable, had the committee who superintended the work, and the clerk who performed it,



been a little more careful and a little less anxious to compress it in one volume.

Soon after the town was burned, another application was made to the Governor for assistance. Safety from the Indians might be enjoyed on the island, but probably the inhabitants of Providence, as the season of planting was approaching, were anxious to improve their lands. Their application is not preserved, but the following answer shows that it was an urgent one.

Newport, this 12 of the 2 mo. 1676. (April 12, 1676.)

Friends,—Your petition with your hands subscribed was received, and the court had knowledge thereof, but having multiplicity of urgent occasions, and considering the general election drew so near, that we now concerned could not so safely determine for the future, as those who may be the next helmsmen, only this for your present encouragement: we well approve your advice and willingness to maintain a garrison, and have agreed to bear the charge of ten men upon the colony's account, till the succeeding authority take further order, and that you may take four of our men to strengthen you, or if it be wholly by yourselves, we, as abovesaid, will bear the charge of ten of them, and after the election, if those concerned see cause, and the colony of ability to do it, I shall not obstruct, if it be continued all the year. Be pleased to despatch our ketch. I have no more to you but my kind love and desire of your peace and safety as my own.

WALTER CLARK.

At the following May session, a committee was appointed to visit Providence with full power to act in this matter. The result was the establishment of a garrison consisting of a captain and seven men, which was called the King's garrison. Arthur Fenner was the captain. From the following paper from the files of the town, it seems probable that a



garrison was established some time before the king's garrison. There is no date to the paper.

"I pray the town in the scenes of the late bloody practices of the natives to give leave to so many as can agree with William Field, to bestow some charge upon fortifying his house for a security to women and children. Also to give me leave and so many that shall agree, to put some defence on the hill between the mill and the highway for the like safety of the women and children in that part of the town. R. W."

The author was Roger Williams, and the note is in his hand writing. He was at one time captain of the train band in Providence. The hill referred to is that over which Stampers-street now passes. William Field's house was situated near where the Providence Bank now is. The remains of the garrison house were still standing within the recollection of some persons living in 1836.

Canonchet, sachem of the Narragansetts, was taken prisoner by the English on the 4th of April 1676. His demeanor after his capture, was such as to extort admiration, even from his enemies. His life was offered him on condition that he would procure or advise the submission of his tribe. He repulsed the offer with disdain. When told that the English would put him to death, he replied, "that would not end the war." And when at last he was informed that he had been sentenced to be shot, "I like it well," said he, "I shall die before my heart is soft, and before I say any thing unworthy of myself." Had such sentiments been uttered by a civilized man, his name would be embalmed in song and his memory perpetuated in history. Shall the savage Canonchet be forgotten?



The capture of Canonchet was a serious blow to Philip, for he had, in his short career, been almost as much feared by the English, as Philip himself. But the race of Philip was almost run. After the swamp fight, he was actively engaged in endeavoring to incite other tribes to join him in the war and in urging his confederates to greater activity. In the summer following he returned to his own tribe, and a body of English and Indians under Captain Church, went immediately in pursuit of him. He was killed in a battle, on the 12th of August 1676, by a renegado Indian of his own tribe, in a swamp near the foot of Mount Hope. The death of these two sachems, followed as they were by successive defeats of the Indians, before the end of the year restored peace to this section of New-England.

In the years 1675 and 6, as well as in several years both before and after, the government of the colony was in the hands of Friends. This may account for the proceedings of the colony during the war, and the wonder should not be that they had not done more, but that they did so much.

The annual town meeting in June, was holden "before Thomas Field's house, under a tree, by the water side." The tree referred to, was probably the old sycamore which formerly stood on the east side of South Main-street, nearly opposite Crawford-street. It was cut down by the side-walk commissioners about 1822. Thomas Field's house stood next to the William Field garrison house. Another town meeting was holden at the same place on the 14th of August. A committee was then appointed to



determine in what manner certain Indian captives then in the town should be disposed of. They reported as follows :

“ We whose names are underwritten, being chosen by the town to set the disposal of the Indians now in town, we agree, that Roger Williams, Nathaniel Waterman, Thomas Fenner, Henry Ashton, John Morey, Daniel Abbott, James Olney, Valentine Whitman, John Whipple, sen. Ephraim Pray, John Pray, John Angell, James Angell, Thomas Arnold, Abraham Man, Thomas Field, Edward Bennett, Thomas Clemence, William Lancaster, William Hopkins, William Hawkins, William Harris, Zachariah Field, Samuel Winsor, and Captain Fenner, shall have each a whole share in the product. Joseph Woodward and Richard Pray, each three fourths of a share, John Smith, miller, and Edward Smith, Samuel Whipple, Nelle Whipple, and Thomas Walling, each, half a share.

Inhabitants wanting, to have Indians, at the price they sell at Rhode-Island or elsewhere. All under five years to serve till thirty, above five and under ten, till twenty-eight, above ten to fifteen, till twenty-seven, above fifteen to twenty, till twenty-six, from twenty to thirty shall serve eight years, all above thirty, seven years.

Roger Williams,      Thomas Field,  
 Thomas Harris, sen.   John Whipple, jr.  
 Thomas + Angell.

August 14, 1676.

In most instances, Indians who were taken prisoners by the English, were sent out of the country and sold for slaves for life. This was the course adopted, generally, in the other colonies. In the case of Philip's son, it was seriously agitated, whether he ought not to be put to death. The civil authority doubted, and consulted four of the most eminent ministers, three of whom decided that, that punishment ought to be inflicted. He was not however so punished but was only sent to Ber-



muda and there sold for a slave. The short times for which these captives of Providence men were disposed of, considering the general practice of New-England, are honorable to the men who proposed them. To gratify curiosity as to the price of Indians on those terms, the following extracts are made from an account of sales about this time.

“To Anthony Low, five Indians, great and small, £8.

To James Rogers, two, for twenty two bushels of Indian corn,

To Philip Smith, two, in silver, £4,10.

To Daniel Allin, one, in silver, £2,10.

To Caleb Carr, one, twelve bushels of Indian corn.

To Elisha Smith, one, in wool, 100 lbs.

To Elisha Smith, one, for three fat sheep.”

The account embraces the sale of thirty-six, of which the above appear to be about an average lot.

The colony passed a law in March 1676, “that no Indian in this colony be a slave but only to pay their debts or for their bringing up, or custody they have received, or to perform covenant as if they had been countrymen and not taken in war.” This was enlightened legislation for those times.

The following circumstance is recorded under date of August 25. “One Chuff, an Indian, so called in time of peace, because of his surliness against the English, he could scarce come in, being wounded some days before by Providence men. His wounds were corrupted and stank; and because he had been a ring-leader, all the war, to most of the mischief to our houses and cattle, and what English he could, the inhabitants of the town, cried out for justice against him, threatening themselves to kill him, if the authority did not. For



which reason, Captain Roger Williams caused the drum to be beat, and the town council and council of war called. All called for justice and execution. The council of war gave sentence and he was shot to death, to the great satisfaction of the town."—The council of war consisted of the magistrates, commissioned military officers and town council. The Indian prisoners were all sent away on the 29th of August in a sloop belonging to Providence Williams, son of Roger, who on the same day had brought up his mother from Newport.

"The town books and records, saved by God's merciful providence from fire and water," were brought up from Newport in April 1677. The minutes of the town meeting proceedings just quoted were kept on a loose sheet of paper, in the hand writing of Mr. Williams.

In October 1668, a colony tax of £300 was imposed on the different towns and settlements, in the following proportions; Providence £10, Newport £136, Portsmouth £68, Warwick £8, Westerly £2, New shoreham £29, Kingston £16, East Greenwich £2, Jamestown £29. This apportionment shows how severely the main land towns had suffered by the Indians. In assessing a town tax in 1679, meadow land was valued at £4, and planting at £3, per acre. Oxen £4, cows £3, horses, four year old, £3, and sheep, four shillings, each. This year mention is made, for the first time, of any public passageway over Seekonk river, below Pawtucket. Four acres of land were granted to Andrew Edmunds, at the narrow passage, he intending to keep a ferry



there. This is where "Central Bridge" now stands. A proposition was also made for the erection of a town house.

"To the Town met this 22d of December 1679.

These are to pray the town now without much further delay before the boards and timber be most all sent out of the township——done to the particular propriety and advantage of only some few particular persons of the town, that they agree lovingly together, for the building them a town house, to keep their meetings at, and not yet to continue further troubles and burdens on some particular persons, without tendering any satisfaction for the privilege thereof, as hath appeared near this two years' space of time, unto your neighbor and friend,

DANIEL ABBOTT.

And that also they take some course to pay their other debts, to remove undeserved jealousy."

Mr. Abbott was town clerk and probably spoke feelingly of the "burdens imposed on some particular persons." It does not appear that the town took any notice of the petition.

At the annual town meeting in June 1680, it was proposed to add two to the town council, so as to make that body as numerous as the councils of other towns. The proposition was agreed to, but it does not appear that any additional members were elected.

At the next annual election (1681) the town again resolve that the town council shall consist, of the assistants for the town, three in number, and five other individuals, and an election was made accordingly. This election, however, seems not to have given satisfaction, for at a town meeting in October, it was resolved that one of the assistants should call a future meeting, at which a town council should be chosen, to consist of the assistants and six others, to



hold their offices till June 1682, and that after that, the council should consist of the same number of persons. Such a meeting was holden on the 14th December and six persons elected, five of whom were the same persons chosen the June preceding.

In May 1680, a colony tax of £100 was ordered, of which the sum of £7 was to be paid by Providence. In the rate bill of 1679, Joseph Jenckes was rated for a saw-mill. This was probably in Pawtucket. In 1680, William Carpenter and his two sons were also rated for one, this probably was at Pawtuxet, also Richard Arnold for one, which is afterward referred to as at Woonsocket. There was yet another saw-mill described as "the saw-mill of our town," the location of which cannot be ascertained. Iron works of some kind were established by Joseph Jenckes, before 1684. He was then rebuilding them, and petitioned the town for leave to take bog ore from the commons.

At the May Session of the General Assembly 1680, a committee reported the number of deaths that had occurred in the colony for the preceding seven years to be four hundred fifty-five. The object of this inquiry does not appear.

In May 1681, riding on a gallop in Providence street between the houses of John Whipple and Par-don Tillinghast was prohibited. The house of the former was a little north of Star street, and the house of the latter not far from Transit street.

Very soon after the accession of James to the throne of England, the English colonies in America, began to experience that Monarch's love of arbitrary



power. Process was issued against such of them as refused to comply with his requisitions, to surrender their charters. This colony did not wait for judgment on the writ *quo warranto* against them, but bending before the storm, surrendered their charter, and cast themselves on the mercy of his Majesty. They believed the better part of valor to be discretion, and subsequent events proved, how little regard was paid by that monarch and by the subservient courts that he established, to the rights of the subject. Sir Edmund Andross arrived in New-England in 1686, with a commission as General Governor of all the colonies. He was a suitable representative of his master. His commission empowered him to rule by and with the consent and advice of a council of his own selection. The colonists derived little advantage from a council holding their offices by such a tenure, nor was the Governor at all checked in his arbitrary designs by these minions of his power. Few of the records of the proceedings of this council are known to be in existence. Enough however remains, coupled with the statements of cotemporary writers, to prove, that the main design of his government was to vest in himself, all the rights of the people. He was carrying into practice in New-England, what his master was doing at home.

This was the most gloomy period in the history of New-England. In their wars with the Indians, though encompassed with enemies on every hand, and at all times exposed to their attacks, they could with confidence rely on the mother country for aid and assistance, whenever they were insufficient to



protect themselves. In their attempts to secure the rights of conscience against the English hierarchy, they had in the bosom of England itself, a large and respectable part of the community, who were aiding them with acts of kindness and fervent prayers. But at this period they were alone. From their fellow subjects in England they could look only for sympathy as from persons suffering equally and from the same cause, with themselves.

There was a point beyond which even the English subjects of James could not be oppressed with impunity. He doubted its existence, or miscalculated its position, and passed it unawares; and he who supposed he had attained despotic power over a nation, became in a day an outcast from that nation and a lone wanderer on the earth. The shout that welcomed the arrival of the Prince of Orange to the shores of England reached the colonies, and the General Governor of New-England became a prisoner to the populace of Boston. This was on the 10th day of April 1689. On the 21st, the following communication was received at Providence from Newport.

“Whereas we have seen a printed paper dated from Boston the 18th of April last, which signifieth that Sir Edmund Andross, our late governor, with several others, are seized and confined, so that many of the free people of this place are bent to lay hold of their former privileges :

Neighbors and Friends, we therefore, cannot omit to recommend unto you, our present grievance, to wit, that we are sufficiently informed, that our late government under which we were subservient, is now silenced and eclipsed, we, under a sense of our deplorable and unsettled condition, do offer to you, wheth-



er it may not be expedient for the several towns of this late colony, the several principal persons therein, to make their personal appearance at Newport, before the day of usual election by charter, which will be the first day of May next, there to consult and agree of some suitable way in this present juncture, and whether our ancient privileges and former methods may not be best to insist upon, which we leave to your judicious consideration, and that you may not say, you were ignorant, but had the most timely notice could be given at so little warning, is all at present from your real friends and neighbors.

W. C.

Newport, this 23d April, 1689.

J. C.

The paper from which the foregoing copy is made, appears to be the original, and is in the hand writing of Walter Clark. The letter itself is very cautiously drawn, and there is no notice of its reception upon the town records.

During the existence of Gov. Andross' administration, little transpired in the concerns of Providence, that can now be gathered from the records. There appear to have been elections of some town officers in 1687 and 8, but none in 1689. In January 1687, a tax of a penny in a pound was assessed, another in July and another in September, and one for £12,3,3 in October. According to the warrant issued by John Usher, Treasurer, July 20th, there was a poll tax of one shilling and eight-pence on each male over sixteen years of age. This tax in January, was assessed on one hundred twenty-seven polls, in July, on one hundred eighty-one, in September, on the same number. The October tax was payable in corn at two shillings and rye at two shillings and eight-pence, per bushel, beef at one penny halfpenny, pork at two-pence, and butter at six-pence, per pound.



It appears from the warrants issued for the assessment and collection of these taxes, that six men were appointed for assessing them called Selectmen, Townsmen and Overseers. Three of their number were to be changed each year; what other duties these officers had to perform, does not appear. The warrants were directed to an officer, styled Commissioner. He was probably selected by the Governor and Council.

The 29th day of April, 1688, was appointed by Sir Edmund, as a day of public thanksgiving and solemn praise, because of his Majesty's "apparent hopes and good assurance of having issue by his royal consort the Queen." There was a diversity of opinion then, whether there was any cause for thanksgiving.

In 1693, a circumstance of unforeseen and extraordinary nature interrupted the peaceful progress of this town. At the June town meeting, a town sergeant and constable were elected, as usual. The persons elected refused to serve. Another town meeting was subsequently holden, the record of which ends with this desponding language, that "the town having met now three days and endeavoring to effect and accomplish the settling of the said officers, but those who are chosen, still refusing to serve, the town are constrained to cease further choice and leave the matter to issue as it may." The like has never occurred since. Probably they had heard of the decision of Knickerbocker's Dutch governor, requiring the constable to pay the costs in a suit where he served the process. That might



satisfactorily account for the occurrence, but in civilized society, there is generally little want of candidates for office, at least, it is so in modern times.

In 1695, the General Assembly ordered a prison to be built in Providence. At a town meeting in February, the town agreed to erect it "near the water's side, next Gideon Crawford's warehouse." The prison was to be ten feet by twelve. Judging from the contentious spirit manifested in their town meetings, one cannot imagine that a prison of these dimensions, afforded very ample and roomy accommodations for such a community. At the April town meeting, the town voted to change the location, but says the record, "whilst the matter was in propagating by the town, obstruction was made by Samuel Windsor, against the same, thereby raising such a tumult amongst the people, that the moderator was put upon to dissolve the meeting." No further proceedings appear in the matter till 1698. In that year a tax of £30 was ordered for the building of a prison. The building was finished as appears by a report of the building committee, before January 1700, at the cost of £21.17, exclusive of the locks. This prison was destroyed by fire before February 1705. For some reasons not given in the record, the General Assembly of the colony, required Joseph Latham and John Scott to build a jail as good as the one which was burnt, or pay £33. At the February session 1705, they, having neglected to erect the building, were ordered to pay the £33, thirty of which were appropriated to the erection of a new one. The



first jail, it will be recollected, was built at the expense of the town. I have not been able to ascertain the precise location of either of these buildings; probably they both occupied the same lot of land. Upon a plat of part of the town made in 1718, "the prison lot" is marked out. This I suppose was the location of the prisons erected in 1693 and in 1705, and is the lot nearly opposite the First District School House, on the west side of Benefit-street. It is believed that a part of the last prison is still standing on that lot, making part of the dwelling house there. This lot was abandoned by the state in 1733, and sold in 1738. The third prison was erected about 1733, on a lot purchased of William Page, on the north side of the road leading to the ferry at narrow passage. This gave to that road, the name of "Jail Lane," which it now sometimes bears, though it has been changed "by authority" to Meeting-street. It was not far from where Benefit-street now crosses Meeting-street. The fourth prison in Providence, was erected in 1753, on a lot of land granted to the state by the proprietors of Providence, adjoining the cove, and west of the lot on which the court house now stands. It was erected on the west part of this lot, standing partly over the water. This building ceased to be used as a prison in the summer of 1799. In June 1794, the General Assembly appointed a committee to build a jail, to be three stories high, fifty-three by forty-two feet, on the ground, at an expense of £2000. The committee was afterwards in January following instructed to build such a jail as the representatives of the county



of Providence should recommend, at an expense, not exceeding £2000. The labors of this committee were interrupted by a vote of the Assembly abolishing all capital and corporeal punishments, and substituting therefor, imprisonment at hard labor, and they were instructed to report a plan for a jail, which should combine with it a state penitentiary. The plan was so far matured in June 1797, that the Assembly ordered the committee to fill up the lot and lay a foundation for a county jail and state prison, according to the plan presented to them. They proceeded in their labors, but were again interrupted in January 1798, by a repeal of the vote for building a state prison, and they were directed to erect a county jail on the foundation, laid for the state prison. It was then completed, by contract for \$8500, and continued to be used as a jail until the erection of the state penitentiary in 1838. It will long be remembered, in its latter days, as a disgrace to the state and a nuisance to the town. It occupied the lot granted to the state by the proprietors of Providence.

A number of freemen of the state, in January 1835, presented a petition to the General Assembly praying them to abolish corporeal punishments and adopt confinement at labor in a state prison in lieu of them. The matter being of grave moment, the Assembly referred it to the freemen at their meeting in April following to decide, whether a state prison should be built and the expense thereof defrayed by a tax on rateable property. At the May session it appeared that 4,433 freemen had voted in the affirmative and 502 in the negative. Measures were



immediately taken to carry the will of the people into effect. At subsequent sessions, the Assembly adopted the Pennsylvania system of discipline, separate confinement at labor with instruction, and decided that the necessary buildings should be erected in Providence, on a lot of land owned by the city, at Great Point, so called, on the cove. The work was soon commenced and was prosecuted with reasonable despatch. Sometime after its commencement, the Assembly resolved to erect a new county jail near to and adjoining the state prison, in order to avail themselves of the conveniences of the former, and of the services of the warden, without additional expense to the state. The original plan of the state prison embraced, a keeper's house two stories high, forty-eight feet square fronting the cove; adjoining this on the north, as mall connecting building, uniting it with the state prison, and the prison, forty-eight feet by ninety-three feet, two stories high. A corridor, ten and a half feet wide passes through the centre of the prison, on each side of which are cells for prisoners. These are forty in number, twenty in each story. Those on the lower floor are eight feet by fifteen, and nine feet high; those on the second floor are eight feet by twelve, and nine feet high at the lowest part, extending to the roof. All the walls of the prison are of granite blocks, laid in courses, and secured by iron cramps. The keeper's house is of common stone, rough cast. A stone wall fifteen feet high, encloses on the west, north and east sides, a yard one hundred and twenty-two feet by two hundred and forty-one.



The county jail adjoins the keeper's house on the east. It is twenty-seven feet by sixty-six, two stories high. It is divided into eighteen cells, seven feet by nine, and four rooms for the accommodation of two persons in each intended for the use of persons committed for debt. Unlike the cells in the state prison, the cells in the county jail are in the centre of the building, the corridor being between them and the walls of the building. The consequence is, that they are not by any means so well ventilated as the cells of the prison. The cells in each establishment are supplied with water from a cistern standing in the upper story of the connecting building, and are warmed by hot water pipes extending through them.

Those who have been committed to the care of the keeper in the state prison, have been unanimous in declaring the establishment to be as near impregnable from within, as any similar establishment which they have visited. It was first occupied on the 15th day of November 1838. Since then thirty-six prisoners have been committed to it, of which twenty-four are now its inmates, the rest having been discharged at the expiration of their sentences, except two, who were pardoned by the General Assembly.

The county jail has gained for itself any thing but an enviable reputation. The policy of erecting it so near the state prison, may now be doubted, while the inexpediency of its mode of construction and its materials is proved beyond doubt.

There does not appear to have been any order of the town appointing the meetings of the town coun-



cil, till 1695. They were then required to be holden monthly, on the Tuesday next before the full moon. In 1696 the ferry at narrow passage was in the possession of Mary Edmonds, widow of Andrew Edmonds. The "King's Post" was permitted to pass free of ferriage. This is the earliest mention that is made of a public post, and this is all that is said upon the subject.

In June 1700, the lot lying "between Archibald Walker's southward to the brook that cometh out of Samuel Whipple's land, eastward with the highway, and westward and northwestward with Moshassuck river" was voted by the town to remain common, "for a training field, burying ground and other public uses." The burying place was to be run out by a committee appointed for that purpose. These bounds include not only what is now enclosed and known as the north burial ground, but a large tract lying to the southward and westward of that, which is now improved by various individuals. Previous to this, most of the old families had family burial grounds, which were generally on some part of their home or house lots. The establishment of this common burial ground did not, in many instances, immediately supersede the use of the family burial grounds before established. Perhaps there is no circumstance that more strongly marks the rigid separation views of the first settlers of Providence, than this. The parish church-yard in England was generally adjoining to or around the parish church. Though, after the reformation, they ceased to consecrate such places with the imposing rites and ceremonies of the



Romish church, there was still a kind of sanctity attached to them in the popular mind. They retained their locations near the church, thus by proximity of position drawing from it a portion of the sacred character it bore. The first settlers of New-England, influenced probably by their early associations, selected similar locations for their burial grounds. But in Providence, as if to show their complete independency, and to testify even after death, their rigid separation, such early associations were disregarded, and every thing was made as unlike the church of England, and the semi-separatist churches of New-England, as possible. It is matter of regret that they had not, at an earlier period, set apart a common burial place for the town. An occasional walk through such a "city of silence" might have calmed the angry passions that so often disturbed the peace of their town, and would have rendered the task of some future Old Mortality who shall search for their resting places, far less difficult and laborious. Most of these private family burial grounds have long since been abandoned, and the mouldering remains of the tenants removed to the public burial ground, or to one of the places of sepulture more recently established by the different religious societies.

Of a colony tax of £400, ordered in 1701, the proportion of Providence was £65. From this it would seem, that this town, in the opinion of the General Assembly, had recovered the comparative standing in point of wealth, which it enjoyed before Philip's war. In 1703, the colony was first divided



into counties. There were two, Providence Plantations, and Rhode-Island. The first embraced all the towns on the main land, and the other, the island towns. Inferior courts were established, at the same time, to be holden in each county. That within the county of Providence Plantations, was holden twice in each year, and at Providence, Warwick, Kingstown and Westerly by turns. This was indeed bringing justice to every man's door, although the terms of the court would not secure a very speedy administration of it there. In 1729, the county of Providence was divided into two counties, and the town of Kingstown, which before that had been divided into North-Kingstown and South-Kingstown, and the town of Westerly were set off and made King's county. Subsequently, in 1750, the county of Providence was again divided and the towns of Warwick, East-Greenwich, West-Greenwich and Coventry, set off and made a county, under the name of Kent county.

In 1705, Weybosset Bridge required rebuilding, and a committee appointed by the town were directed to call on every individual to solicit subscriptions for that purpose. The subscription paper is in the files of the city clerk's office. It contains only fourteen names. The highest sum subscribed was £6, by Gideon Crawford, and the whole amount £21,9. The probability is that the committee did not call on the inhabitants generally, or they would have obtained more signatures and collected a larger amount.

In 1711, the General Assembly granted £200 out



of the general treasury toward building bridges at Pawtucket, Weybosset and Pawtuxet. Similar appropriations of various amounts were subsequently made, not only for the repairs of these bridges and others which stood on the main road laid out by the General Assembly through the colony from Pawtucket to Pawcatuck, over which was the principal part of the travel from Massachusetts to New York, but also of other bridges throughout the colony. For instance, in 1736, £15 was granted toward erecting a bridge over the Wanasquatucket river at five acre wading place ; in 1739, £53 toward completing one at Woonsocket ; in 1740, £25 for erecting one over Muddy Bridge dock at Providence ; and in 1752, £50 more, for the same purpose. The last mentioned bridge was located in Weybosset-street in Providence, opposite the North end of Dorrance-street. It is said that spring tides formerly flowed across from Dorrance-street into the cove. When these appropriations for the support of bridges in the several towns ceased the towns were declared by the General Assembly liable to repair the same at their own expense.

A colony tax of £1000 was ordered in 1705, payable in wheat at three shillings eight-pence, rye at two shillings six-pence, corn at two shillings, barley at one shilling eight-pence, oats at one shilling per bush. and wool at nine-pence per lb. In 1710, there were seven licenses granted for houses of public entertainment and for retailing liquors. The highest sum paid for any one license was £2. The election of town council in 1713 was made with a view to this subject. At



the annual town meeting, six town council men were chosen as usual, but the moderator refused to engage them, because the majority of them were keepers of public houses or retailers of strong liquor. The freemen persisted in their choice, and the meeting was adjourned to another day without bringing the election to a close. At the adjourned meeting a council was elected. The council first chosen, entered a protest against their election, but it seems they held their seats. They differed in opinion not upon the question whether any licenses should be granted, but upon the amount that each licensed person should be required to pay into the town treasury. There really existed a seeming impropriety in having those first chosen, act on this question ; but that was the business of the freemen who elected them. Now it would rightly be deemed a high-handed act, for a magistrate to refuse to administer the oath of office to an individual, duly elected, because he disliked his principles.

In 1710, the colony agreed to raise two hundred men, to go in the expedition against Port Royal. Each town was required to send a certain proportion and the quota of Providence was forty, and eight Indians. Of the one hundred and seventy-nine men raised in 1711 for the Canada expedition, Providence was required to raise thirty-five.

At the May session of the General Assembly 1710, a law was passed authorizing the emission of paper money. This was the first paper money issued in this state. The measure had been resorted to in Massachusetts some years previously, and it owes its



origin in all the colonies to the expenses incurred in their several expeditions against the French possessions in America, in the wars between England and France. During this and the succeeding year, this colony issued between thirteen and fourteen thousand pounds in bills of public credit. In 1712 no further emissions were made, but, it seems that it was proposed to resort again to this measure in the following year. The subject was agitated in a meeting of the freemen of Providence, and a protest against it was drawn up, signed by the town clerk, and sent to the General Assembly. There is no copy of this paper in the files of the Secretary of State, nor was it entered in the records of the town; it is impossible, therefore, to ascertain upon what grounds their opposition to further issues of bills of credit, was placed. The records of the State do not show that the subject was brought before the General Assembly that year. No more bills were issued that year, nor till 1715. From that year till 1786, the colony continued the emission of paper money, as the exigences of the times, and private interest under the cloak of the public weal, demanded.

The town was visited by the small pox in 1716, but to what extent does not appear; enough however to obtain a place in the records. The attention of the town was called, in 1717, to their debt which had been accumulating for several years.—The town tax had rarely exceeded sixty pounds a year, but this year a tax of £150 was ordered. The greater part of the debt accrued in the support of the poor and in laying out highways. A tax of the



same amount was ordered in 1720. The necessity of this, arose in part from the different bounties offered for the destruction of certain animals. In 1716 the bounty on wolves was twenty shillings, and on grey squirrels twopence. Some estimate of the numbers of the latter may be formed from the fact that in 1720 the town owed sixteen pounds for bounties on grey squirrels. The bounty was repealed in July 1723, but renewed in October and increased to threepence. In the following year rats were rated at the same price. The bounty on wildcats was five shillings; in 1729, it was raised to ten.

There seems to have been a failure of the grain crop in 1724. The General Assembly passed an act preventing the exportation of corn till the common price should be five shillings per bushel, and directed the General Treasurer to purchase two thousand bushels, to be disposed of to the inhabitants in small quantities.

At the general election in the spring of 1727, Joseph Jenckes, of Providence, was elected Governor of the colony. All his predecessors in that office under the charter of 1663, belonged to Newport, and the General Assembly deemed it expedient for Governor Jenckes to reside there, with his family. They made him a grant of one hundred pounds from the General Treasury to defray the charges of removing his family. Samuel Cranston, his immediate predecessor in the office of Governor, died in April. He had been elected to the office twenty-nine years in succession; a longer term it is believed, than any



other individual ever held a similar office in New-England.

At a session of the Assembly holden in August, measures were adopted for proclaiming the accession of George the second to the throne of Great Britain. The proclamation at Newport, was on the 24th of August, and at Providence, on the 25th. The General Assembly appropriated ten pounds to be expended on the occasion at Providence. According to tradition, the proclamation in Providence was first read from a balcony in the second story on the west end of the Manufacturers' Hotel, in Market-Square. George the third was proclaimed king from the same balcony, and afterwards the Declaration of Independence, in 1776, the restoration of peace, in 1783, and the adoption of the Constitution of the United States by this State, in 1790, were published from the same place. The balcony had become ruinous and was taken down a few years since.

At the division of the county of Providence Plantations, in 1729, a county house was ordered to be erected, at the expense of the colony, in each of the three counties which then composed the colony. At the October session of the General Assembly, a committee reported in favor of a location on land of William Page, the same lot now occupied by the city school house on Meeting-street. The report was adopted, but at the session in February following, the matter was reconsidered, and it was left to the freemen of Providence in town meeting to determine whether it should be erected on that lot or on land



of James Olney, on or near what is now Olney-street. In March the freemen selected the Page lot. In January preceding, the town voted to assist in the erection of the house, if they could have the use of it for their town meetings, and the direction as to its site, prescribing also that the building should be forty feet by thirty on the ground, and eighteen feet posts, with a chimney from the chamber floor. This accounts for the act of the Assembly passed in January. The committee for building the house were William Smith and James Brown, jr. Their accounts were audited in October 1731 ; the amount was six hundred and sixty-four pounds nine shillings. It was probably finished that year, but not until after April town meeting, as that appears by the record to have been holden in the Friends' meeting-house.

This building was destroyed by fire on the evening of the 24th of December 1758. Permission had been given to an association of persons, afterwards incorporated as the Providence Library Company, to use one of the chambers for a library. By availing themselves of this grant, they lost their whole collection of books.

In February following a committee consisting of Joseph Brownell, Obadiah Brown, William Read, Thomas Arnold, Joshua Babcock and Joseph Russell, was appointed to inquire in what part of Providence it would be expedient to erect a new court-house, and what kind of a building should be built. At the ensuing May session the General Assembly resolved to erect the court house on the lot where the former one stood or upon the lot next north of it, provided



that could be obtained without expense to the colony. Allen Brown, William Smith and David Harris were appointed the building committee. At the June session, a lottery was granted to raise \$2000, one half for building the court house and the other for replacing the Library. In February, another lottery grant was given, to raise \$1200 for the Providence Library Company, and one to raise \$1000 to purchase the court-house lot. In May, the General Assembly had recourse to bills of credit towards building the court-house, and £1000 lawful money was issued for that purpose. A further issue of £15,000 old tenor, for the same object, was made in February, 1761. The cost of the building, so far as completed in 1762, was reported by a committee, to be £51,556,0,11 old tenor. The tradition is, that the building committee decided upon the erection of a much smaller edifice and that the architect, better understanding or appreciating the wants of the colony, erected the present one, without consulting them, and that the difference was not discovered until it had so far advanced, that it would cost less to finish it than to pull down and begin anew. If so, the conduct of the architect may rightly be called a pious fraud.

This may have occasioned the great delay in completing it. It is a brick building, about forty feet by seventy, two stories high, of fair proportions and prepossessing appearance. At the time of its erection, it might well be esteemed large and commodious, for the purposes for which it was erected. The legislature and the courts of law still hold their ses-



sions in the upper story. Recently, that story has been fitted up anew, and rendered more convenient and showy than originally. The lower story within a few years, has been occupied by the Secretary of State and the clerks of the courts.

A census of the inhabitants was taken in 1730, in pursuance of an order from the King. The population of the colony was then, Whites, 15,302; Negroes, 1,648; Indians, 985; total, 16,935. Of Providence, Whites, 3,707; Negroes, 128; Indians, 81; total 3,916. Of Newport, Whites, 3,843; Negroes, 649; Indians, 248; total, 4,640. The census was taken before any division had been made of the town and probably included those who lived on "the Gore," since called Cumberland, as that was declared to be within Providence by the General Assembly at their session in May. The militia of the colony were then divided into five regiments. There were five companies of militia in Providence.

It was contemplated in 1738, to establish a county work house, for the poor in the county of Providence. The town appointed William Hopkins to represent them in a meeting called to consider the matter. It is not perhaps necessary to add, that the design was not carried into execution.

The project was renewed by the towns of Providence, Smithfield, Scituate, Glocester and Cumberland, before the General Assembly, at their February session, 1753. Those towns were authorised to erect such a house, and to appoint one individual from each town, to have the oversight and management of it. Any town in the counties of Bristol



and Kent, had a right to join in the undertaking. The expense of the building was to be apportioned as the colony tax, but each town was to pay for the support of its own paupers, who should become inmates of the institution. If this was ever established, it continued as a joint concern but a very short time. Out of it in all probability arose the "Old work house," which formerly stood on the corner of Smith and Charles streets. A long, low brick building that was, which promised little to the poor unfortunate beings who were compelled to inhabit it. To those who recollect it, it can be associated with no feelings of pride, for the provision there made for the poor, nor with any fear that it would increase the evils of pauperism. Some of the paupers of Providence continued to exist in it, until the erection of the Dexter Asylum in 1828. Long before that, it had become a place rather of punishment than relief. In the rear of it, in 1796, the town erected their Bridewell. This was a small stone building, thirty-two feet by fourteen, ten feet high, intended for the detention and punishment of the lowest order of petty criminals. Neither of these establishments are referred to out of choice. They have existed, and therefore they are referred to. Whatever of good resulted from them, if any did, must have been in their early days, before they fell within the author's knowledge.

In 1803, the attention of the town was again called to their expenditures for the support of the poor. By a report, made by a committee appointed on the subject, it appears that forty-one persons, of whom twenty-six were children, were then wholly depen-



dent on the town. The most of these were boarded out. The support of these persons, with the supplies furnished to other persons, partially dependent, cost the town the year ending June, 1803, \$3660. The committee recommended, that until an alms house for the poor, and a house of labor for the idle, the intemperate and the disorderly, should be erected, the overseers should continue the ordinary course of providing for the poor. They were directed to purchase a lot for a workhouse. This was done, and the "Sessions lot," so called, near the north end of the town, was purchased for that purpose. No alteration was made in the mode of supporting the poor, until long after this. A few were consigned to the old work house, the greater part were boarded out.

Up to 1739, the only public means of crossing the Seekonk river where it bounded Providence, were the bridge at Pawtucket, and the ferry, at narrow passage. A private ferry had been kept for some time near where Washington Bridge now stands. A petition was preferred to the General Assembly, at May session, by Josiah Fuller and Elisha Tillinghast, to establish a public ferry at this place. The project was delayed by another petition subsequently preferred by Daniel Abbott to have one established at a different place, probably further down the river. The matter was referred to a committee and does not again appear in the colony records. Subsequently, a ferry was established at the place suggested in the first petition. The ferriage was regulated by the General Assembly in 1746.



The town had, almost from its first settlement, held, quarter-yearly meetings on the 27th days of April, July, October, and January. This year, the days of meeting were changed to the second Mondays of the same months. In 1744, the meetings in April and October were appointed to be on the third Wednesdays in those months.

Among the papers in the cabinet of the Historical Society is a printed broadside, entitled, "A journal of a survey of Narragansett Bay made in May and June 1741 by order of royal commissioners, by one of the surveyors. W. C." Providence is thus described in it.

" This pleasant town doth border on the flood,  
Here's neighboring orchards, and more back the woods,  
Here's full supply to cheer our hungry souls,  
Sir Richard, strong, as well as wine, in bowls.  
Here men may soon any religion find,  
Which quickly brought brave Holland to my mind,  
For here, like there, one, with the greatest ease,  
May suit himself, or quit all if he please."

The commissioners here referred to, were those who settled the eastern line of the colony. They sat at Providence in June 1741. The province of Massachusetts appealed from their decision, to the King in council, where it was confirmed, after a hearing, in 1746.

In 1744 commenced the lottery system in this colony, out of which so much good and so much evil have arisen. The first grant of a lottery, by the General Assembly, was at the October session, to build a bridge at Weybosset. The amount of the scheme was £15,000, out of which £3,000 was to



go toward erecting the bridge. The managers of the lottery were, William Rice, of Warwick, Daniel Jenckes, George Brown, Stephen Hopkins, and Daniel Smith, of Providence, and Job Randall, of Scituate. To encourage the lottery, or rather to encourage the citizens to adventure in it, the town, in July following, purchased four hundred tickets. They did not meet however with the rapid sale they anticipated; or some misunderstanding arose between the managers and building committee of the town, for the latter, in October 1745, were directed not to proceed to build till further orders. The General Assembly in February following, at the request of the town, directed the £3,000 to be lodged in the town treasury and to be laid out under the direction of the town. The bridge to be built was eighteen feet in width. The eastern abutment was carried out thirty feet, and the western four, of the same breadth. It rested on a stone pillar in the middle. While the bridge was building, the General Assembly appointed a ferry to be kept there. Amaziah Waterman was chosen ferryman on the east side, and Job Sweeting on the west. The bridge had been rebuilt, about 1719. Before that, it was carried away by a freshet. It is difficult to imagine a time, when a bridge, only eighteen feet wide, would be sufficient to accommodate the public at that place.

The population of the colony in 1748 amounted to 4,123. Douglas says, the number of freemen who voted in Providence, this year, was 96, the number of representatives, 4, of justices of the peace, 13, of companies of militia, 4. The whole number of Whites, 3,177,



Negroes, 225, Indians, 50. The records show no deficiency of licensed tavern-keepers. In 1749, there were 31 ; in 1750, thirty. The highest sums paid were by Joseph Angell, William Pearce, and Jonathan Olney, eight pounds each. Of a colony tax of £5,000, ordered in 1748, Providence paid £550, and Newport £825. The debit side of the town treasurer's account, the same year, amounted to £1,165,5,5. A town tax of £1,600 was ordered in 1749.

Up to the year 1754, there does not appear to have been any measures taken, by the government of the colony, or town, to protect property from the ravages of fire. This year, the inhabitants of the compact part of Providence petitioned for power to purchase a "large water engine." Obadiah Brown and James Angell were appointed a committee to "rate the housing and all other things in the compact part of the town of Providence which are liable to be destroyed by fire," a sum sufficient to purchase the engine petitioned for. A law was also passed by the colony requiring each housekeeper to be provided with two fire buckets. It is probable they waited to have their attention called to this matter, by some devastating fire, either here or in some neighboring place. The destruction of the court house by fire in 1758, seems to have called the attention of the town again to the subject. In February following an act of the Assembly was passed, giving the town power to appoint presidents of firewards and firewards. The rate for their engine, though assessed, was not paid till April 1759. It appears that the engine was purchased some time



before. In December 1760, the same persons were authorized, at a meeting of the compact part of the town, to purchase another engine, in Boston. Engine men were first appointed by the town, in June 1763.

This, it is apprehended, is the commencement of the fire department, in Providence. From this small beginning, it has gradually and steadily increased, in proportion to the increase of the town. In 1842, it consisted of three presidents of firewards, eighteen firewards, and six hundred firemen, attached to three hydraulions, nine suction engines, two hook and ladder carriages, eight hose carriages, seventeen forcing stationary engines, having eight thousand feet of hose, and eighteen reservoirs. The department will not suffer, by comparison with that of any other city in the Union.

Of a colony tax assessed in 1755, of £70,000, Newport was required to pay £14,000, South Kingstown, £5200, Providence £4900. The town tax the next year was £2600, and in 1757, £3000. The number of tavern keepers' licenses vary in several years, but are generally, from twenty to thirty. The highest amount paid by any individual was £12. The town council generally met at the house of some one of these licensed tavern keepers, and dined there, at the expense of the town. It does not appear that they received any compensation for their services. In an account on file, in the city clerk's office, Luke Thurston charges the council with "dinner, &c."—"dinner and liquor"—"dinner, punch and wine." The constituted authorities then deemed it proper to



patronize the houses they licensed, and there does not appear any great disproportion, between the amounts charged for dinners and for the liquor that followed them. For instance, April 3, 1757, six dinners are charged at £5,8, punch £2. May 28, seven dinners at £6,6, punch, £2.

In March and April, 1758, nearly two thousand of the king's troops were quartered in Providence, for a short time. They were destined against the French possessions in America.

At a town meeting in April, David Bucklin presented a petition to the town for permission to erect a market house, on the lot at the east end of Weybosset Bridge, belonging to the town, for his sole benefit; which was granted. He did not carry his plan into execution, probably owing to the dissatisfaction that the grant created among the inhabitants. In June following, Daniel Abbott, Ephraim Bowen and Daniel Jenckes were appointed by the town to build a public market house at the same place, provided it could be done without expense to the town. The condition imposed frustrated the plan. It does not appear to have been revived until 1769, when an anonymous writer in the Providence Gazette, called the attention of the town to the subject. Although he enforced the importance of the matter, with many cogent reasons, no steps were taken to carry it into execution, until August, 1771, when the town resolved to erect a market house near "the bridge." The location seems not to have been generally approved, for at the same



meeting, some of the inhabitants on the west side of the river, presented a petition for leave to build a market house on Muddy Bridge dock, now known as Dorrance-street, which was granted; another portion presented a similar petition to build one on the town's land east of Mill bridge, which was also granted. The grant of a lottery was obtained from the General Assembly, to build the town market house. The directors were Stephen Hopkins and Joseph Brown, to whom the town entrusted the erection of the building. The work was commenced on the 24th day of May 1773. Nicholas Brown, laid the first stone on the 11th day of June following.

It was a brick structure, eighty feet by forty, and two stories high. The lower story was used as a market, and the second divided into offices, and occupied partly by the officers of the town, and partly by tenants. In 1797, the town granted to St. John's Lodge of free and accepted masons, the right to add a third story to the market house, to be used by them as a hall, until the town should see proper to purchase it, they keeping the roof in repair. A basement story was subsequently formed by the town, and also used for a market.

In April, 1819, the town directed a fish market to be erected, near to the north east corner of Weybosset bridge, and partly over the river. A light, commodious wooden building, twelve feet by sixty, was accordingly erected there, the following summer. After the erection of the new bridge, just north of Weybosset bridge, in 1823, the fish market was removed to the northward of that bridge. The town



never purchased more advantages, at the same cost, than this market has afforded them. In 1755, the commissioners of trade and plantations directed an account to be taken of the number of inhabitants in the colony, and the quantity of arms and ammunition in the hands of private persons. A document prepared and sent by Gov. Hopkins, dated December 24th, 1755, shows the result. The whole population of the colony is reported to be 35,939 Whites, and 4697 Blacks—9177 men, 8944 women—8783 boys—9035 girls. The men able to bear arms, amounted to 2997—the enlisted soldiers, to 5265. There were, in the colony, 5032 small arms, 2418 swords, 624 pistols, 3286 lbs. of powder, 64,689 balls. By the same return, Providence is stated to contain 747 men, 741 women, 665 boys, 754 girls, and 262 Blacks—275 men able to bear arms, 406 enlisted soldiers—349 small arms, 181 swords, 56 pistols, 762 lbs. of powder, 3871 balls. This statement shows a very rapid increase of population in the colony.

The following paper is inserted, as showing the readiness with which some of the principal citizens of Providence enlisted, to serve his majesty, against the French in America. The original is among the papers of the late Moses Brown, a copy of which was deposited by him in the cabinet of the Historical Society.

Whereas the British colonies in America are invaded by a large army of French and Indian enemies, who have already possessed themselves of Fort William Henry, and are now on their march to penetrate further into the country, and from whom we have nothing to expect, should they succeed in their enterprise, but death and devastation; and as his majesty's principal



officers, in the part invaded, have, in the most pressing and moving manner, called on all his majesty's faithful subjects for assistance, to defend the country, therefore, we, whose names are underwritten, thinking it our duty to do every thing in our power, for the defence of our liberties, families and properties, are willing and have agreed, to enter voluntarily into the service of our country, and go in a warlike manner against the common enemy, and hereby call upon and invite all our neighbors who have families and properties to defend, to join with us in this undertaking, promising to march, as soon as we are two hundred and fifty in number, recommending ourselves and our cause to the favorable protection of Almighty God.

Providence, August 15, 1757.

Stephen Hopkins,	Nicholas Brown,
Obadiah Brown,	Joseph Brown,
Nicholas Cooke,	William Wheaton,
Barzillai Richmond,	William Smith,
Joseph Bucklin,	Jonathan Clark,
John Randall,	Jonathan Ballou,
John Cole,	James Thurber,
Gideon Manchester,	Amos Kinnicut,
Ephraim Bowen, surgeon,	Nathaniel Olney,
John Waterman,	Joseph Lawrence,
Joseph Arnold,	Theophilus Williams,
John Bass, chaplain,	John Power,
John Thomas, jr.	Benjamin Olney,
Allen Brown,	George Hopkins,
Benoni Pearce,	Edward Smith,
Barnard Eddy,	Joseph Winsor,
Benjamin Doubleday,	Joseph Cole.

The foregoing names, and many others, were prepared, intending to march the next day; the militia, under Col. John Andrews, had marched; but an express arriving with the intelligence, that the French and Indian army had gone back, the volunteers herein named did not march, but the militia had got to the widow of Resolved Waterman's in Smithfield, where I was sent with orders for their return, in consequence, of the return of the French and Indian army; which as a historical fact, I thought well to preserve.

MOSES BROWN."

In 1761 and 1762, and 1763, grants of lotteries were very frequent. Several were made to the town



to raise £21,300, for paving streets, one was made to the Church of England, to repair their church and build a steeple, one to the Congregational Society, to purchase parsonage, &c.

At the October session, 1761, of the General Assembly, the deputies of Providence represented, that on the 24th of October, 1761, there was "a hard gale of wind which brought the highest tide into the harbor of Providence that hath been known in the memory of man, and carried away the Great or Weybosset bridge." £1000, old tenor, was granted from the general treasury, toward rebuilding it. The whole cost, at this time of rebuilding it, was £4357,10,1. A lottery was subsequently granted, to build a draw in this bridge. From this circumstance, it is probable that none of the preceding bridges had draws in them. This would seem improbable, from the fact, that much ship-building was carried on above the bridge; unless the planking of the bridge could be removed, so as to enable vessels to pass. After this, vessels from the West Indies, with full cargoes, went up as far as the foot of Bowen-street. The tradition is, that the first square rigged vessel that ever sailed from the port, sailed from a wharf as high up as the canal market. That great and important changes have taken place, not only in the depth, but in the course of the channel of the river, is frequently demonstrated, by excavations made at a great distance from the present channel. He who should examine a plat in the proprietors' office, made in 1718, would hardly recognize the places there designated.



Of a colony tax of £16,000, ordered in 1761, £972 was assessed on Providence, and £3200 on Newport. A new estimate of the taxable property of the colony was ordered this year, and completed in the following one, the effect of which was to increase the taxes of Providence. In a colony tax of £8000, ordered in September, 1762, £500 was assessed on Providence, and £1560 on Newport. This estimate caused much trouble, both to town and colony; the town refused to assess any tax, until a new estimate was ordered.

William Goddard set up the first printing office in Providence, in the year 1762. Among the earliest inhabitants was a printer, Gregory Dexter, but he never followed his trade, here. The articles first printed in Providence, were a hand-bill headed "Moro Castle taken by storm," and a play bill. In a letter written afterwards by Mr. Goddard to Isaiah Thomas, then at Worcester, he says he thinks this was in June. He adds in the same letter, "much company from Boston, &c., attended the theatre and were highly gratified. The theatrical campaign was short. Party politics occasioned the suppression of plays." Mr. Thomas states, in his second volume of the History of Printing, that the "first play, publicly performed, in New-England, was by Douglas and his company, at Providence, in 1762." David Douglas, the manager, was a Scotchman; he brought with him the first company of players that ever performed in North-America. This was about 1758. The place of performance, in Providence, was on Meeting-street, east of Benefit-street. The suggestion



that party politics caused the suppression of plays, is probably incorrect. The subject was debated by the town in July, and the deputies of the town instructed to procure the passage of an act prohibiting them. Such an act was passed in August following. Party politics may have influenced the General Assembly, but it is quite improbable that the town were moved, by the same cause. After the passage of the act, the tradition is, that the sheriff of the county, Paul Tew, brought a copy of the act from Newport, and attended the theatre with it in his pocket. The direction in the act was, that it should be published forthwith, and after the performance was finished, he discharged this duty, by reading the act. The law remained in force for some time. After its repeal, theatrical exhibitions continued, at intervals, in different parts of the town. Plays were so much in vogue, at one time, that they were exhibited in the court house; at another time, about 1794, in a building long since removed, which stood in the rear of the old coffee house, so called, between North Main street and the cove, near Weybosset bridge. Afterwards, in 1795, the theatre, at the corner of Westminster and Mathewson streets was erected by a company of proprietors. It was opened, under the management of Mr. Harper, in September, 1795; the first evening's performance being "the Child of Nature," and "Rosina or the Reapers." The celebrated tragedian, George Frederick Cooke, finished his professional career in this house. This continued to be occupied, with varied success, until 1832, when it was disposed of, and converted into an Episcopal



church. From the sale of this house, up to 1839, there existed no theatre in Providence. Some enterprising individuals associated themselves together, in the last named year, and erected the large and commodious theatre on Dorrance street. This building is of stone, 120 feet by 60, and cost about \$20,000. It has not, probably, yielded that pecuniary advantage to the proprietors which they anticipated.

No notice has been taken of the progress of the two wars which England waged with France and Spain, between 1739 and 1763. The English colonies engaged in them, with their whole soul; but neither the town of Providence, nor the colony of Rhode-Island, was distinguished from the other colonies, either by sufferings or exertions.



## CHAPTER FOURTH.

### GENERAL HISTORY.

FROM THE PEACE OF 1763, TO THE PEACE OF 1783.

THE period embraced in this chapter, is one of the most important and interesting in American history. The war which ended in 1763, disclosed the military strength of the British colonies, and inured them to the toils and privations of the camp. They acquired military skill, and became accustomed to military discipline, under the experienced commanders which were sent here by the mother country. Instead of being exhausted, they were enriched by this war. Many valuable prizes, the product neither of their industry nor care, were taken from the enemy and brought into their ports. The mother country paid them large sums for their personal services, and much of the money expended on her own troops in the service, centred here. All that Great Britain gained, were splendid victories, a vast accumulation to her national debt, and jurisdiction over provinces, which all experience since, has shown to be more costly than valuable to her.

These circumstances, with others, induced the British government to attempt raising a revenue from her colonies, by enforcing her navigation acts, which had always been a dead letter, and by imposing stamp and other duties. The colonists had riot-



ed too long in the full enjoyment of liberty, to submit tamely to these burdens. They insisted that they were entitled to all the rights of native born Englishmen ; among which, and, by no means the least valuable, was the right of taxing themselves. However the colonies differed in their origin, or in their political or religious constitutions, they all agreed in this, that the right of imposing taxes resided in the colonial legislatures and not in the British parliament. The stamp duty was felt by every individual, in the common and ordinary transactions of life, and thus it aroused the whole mass at once, to resistance. Long before the stamped paper arrived the people had determined that it should not be used. Those appointed to distribute it, were generally compelled to resign their offices. In some places, they suffered personal indignities, and in others, their houses and property were destroyed, by the populace. No open act of violence occurred in Providence. A special town meeting convened on the 7th day of August, 1765, to consider what steps were necessary to be taken. They appointed Stephen Hopkins, Nicholas Cooke, Samuel Nightingale, jr. John Brown, Silas Downer and James Angell, a committee to draft instructions to their representatives in the General Assembly. At an adjourned meeting on the 13th of the same month, they reported the following instructions which were adopted unanimously.

“ As a full and free enjoyment of British liberty and of our particular rights, as colonists, long since precisely known and ascertained by uninterrupted practice and usage from the first



settlement of this country down to this time, is of unspeakable value, and strenuously to be contended for, by the dutiful subjects of the best frame of government in the world, any attempts to deprive them thereof, must be very alarming and ought to be opposed, although in a decent manner, yet with the utmost firmness.

We conceive that some late resolutions of the Parliament of Great Britian, for taxing us without our consent, have a tendency to divest us of our most valuable privileges as Englishmen ; and that the measures adopted by the ministry and the Parliament, in this behalf, if carried into execution, will be a manifest infraction of our inherent rights as members of the British government and unspeakably injurious in the present distressed and involved state of the colony.

The ministry, in justification of this encroachment upon the incontestible rights of his Majesty's liege subjects in these parts of the world, have pretended that the colonies are represented in Parliament by the British members ; the contrary is so evident, that a bare denial is sufficient to refute it.

The refusal of Parliament to hear the humble petitions of the colonies against the Stamp-Act, the enlargement of the admiralty jurisdiction and the burdening of trade, we look upon as a great grievance, and directly against our rights, as subjects.

With the utmost concern and dread, we consider the extension of the powers of the court of admiralty, and must freely declare to the whole world, that we look upon our natural rights to be diminished in the same proportion, as the powers of that court are extended ; and in this particular, we are unhappily distinguished from our fellow subjects in Great Britian.

We think it needful in this critical conjuncture, to give unto you who are our deputies, some instructions to be by you observed in your representation of us in the General Assembly.

In the first place, we recommend it to you, in the most express manner, to use your utmost endeavors that commissioners be appointed by the Assembly to meet with the commissioners from the other colonies on the continent, at New-York on the first day of October next, agreeably to the proposals and request of the province of the Massachusetts Bay, signified to this colony, in order to unite in a petition to the King, for relief from the Stamp-Act and other grievances.



In the choice of these commissioners, we are assured from our knowledge of your virtue, that you will pay more attention to merit, skill in public business and zeal for the welfare of the colonies, than to any other consideration.

We likewise request you to do all in your power, consistent with our relation to Great Britain, toward postponing the introduction of the Stamp-Act into this colony until the colonies may have opportunity to be heard in defence of such just rights as they will be deprived of by an execution of it. And to this end that you endeavor to procure our essential rights and privileges to be asserted in General Assembly, by votes or resolves to the following effect, to wit.

I. That the first adventurers, settlers of this his Majesty's colony and dominion of Rhode-Island and Providence Plantations, brought with them and transmitted to their posterity, and all other his Majesty's subjects since inhabiting in this his Majesty's colony, all the privileges and immunities, that have, at any time, been held, enjoyed and possessed by the people of Great Britain.

II. That by a charter granted by King Charles the second, in the 15th year of his reign, it is declared and granted unto the Governor and company of this colony and their successors, that all and every subject of his said Majesty, his heirs and successors, which were then planted within the said colony, or which should thereafter go to inhabit within the said colony, and all and every of their children, which had been born there, or which should afterwards be born there, or on the sea, going thither, or returning from thence, should have and enjoy all the liberties and immunities of free and natural subjects within any of the dominions of his said Majesty, his heirs or successors, to all intents, constructions and purposes whatsoever, as if they and every of them were born within the realm of England.

III. That his Majesty's liege people of this colony have enjoyed the right of being governed by their own Assembly in the article of taxes and internal police; and that the same hath never been forfeited, or in any other way yielded up, but hath been constantly recognized by the King and people of Britain.

IV. That therefore, his Majesty or his substitutes, together with the General Assembly of this colony, have in their representative character, the only exclusive right to lay taxes and



imposts upon the inhabitants of this colony ; and that every attempt to vest such power in any person or persons whatever, other than the General Assembly aforesaid, is unconstitutional, and hath a manifest tendency to destroy British, as well as American, liberty.

V. That his Majesty's liege people, the inhabitants of this colony, are not bound to yield obedience to any law or ordinance designed to impose any internal taxation whatsoever upon them, other than the laws and ordinances of the General Assembly aforesaid.

And inasmuch as it hath lately been drawn into question, how far the people of this his Majesty's dominion of Rhode-Island, have the right of being tried by juries, we earnestly recommend it to you, to procure an act to be passed, if it may be done, declaring that the courts of common law only, and not any court of admiralty, have and ought to have jurisdiction, in all causes, growing or arising in this colony on account of levying or collecting any internal taxes, or of any matters relating thereto.— And that such process and way of trial, shall hereafter be had and used in such matters, as have been usual and accustomed, time out of mind ; and further, that no decree of any court of admiralty, respecting these matters, shall be executed in this colony.

We think that an address of thanks ought to be voted by the General Assembly to those gentlemen who distinguished themselves at the last session of Parliament, in defence of liberty and the colonies ; in particular to General Conway and Colonel Isaac Barre.

As to other matters, not of such general concernment as the foregoing, we leave their management to your prudence and judgment, in which we put the greatest confidence."

The first four of these resolutions are couched in nearly the same language with those passed by the house of Burgesses in Virginia. They were introduced there by the celebrated Patrick Henry, and were adopted with some slight amendments. He also offered there the fifth, which was rejected. They were introduced into the General Assembly of this



colony, at their session in September following, and adopted by them with the addition of a sixth, declaring .. that the officers in this colony, appointed by the authority thereof, be and they are hereby directed to proceed in the execution of their respective offices, in the same manner as usual; and that this Assembly will indemnify and save harmless all the said officers on account of their conduct, agreeable to this resolution." The Assembly struck out from the fourth resolution the words "his Majesty or his substitutes," thus declaring themselves to be the only body having right to impose taxes on the inhabitants of the colony. These resolutions fall little short of a declaration of entire independency of the British government. They go as far, if not farther, than any legislative proceedings of the same date in the country. They were soon followed, however, throughout the country, by votes of a similar character; and such was the unanimity of the inhabitants, and so great the opposition to these taxes, here as well as at home, that they produced the repeal of the Stamp-Act in March 1766. This repeal might have restored peace to the colonies, had it not contained a clause declaratory of the right of Parliament to bind the colonies in all cases whatsoever.—If the right existed, this clause in the act was unnecessary; and if it did not, the act could not create it. The repeal, clogged as it was, was hailed with great joy throughout the colonies. The following notice of the first celebration of this event, is taken from the Providence Gazette.

"To show our loyalty to our most gracious sovereign, as well as to express our love of liberty, the anniversary of his Majesty's



birth-day was fixed upon for a day of public rejoicing. Accordingly the auspicious morn was ushered in by the ringing of bells and a discharge of several cannon from a battery planted on the parade. The court house, a most elegant structure, was beautifully ornamented with colors, and the shipping in the harbor, hove out theirs, at a signal given. Joy and gladness shone in every countenance; and nothing was to be heard but mutual congratulations, until 11 o'clock, when, according to the order of the day, there was a general gathering of the people on the parade. From thence they marched in order with drums beating, trumpets sounding, and colors displayed, to the Presbyterian meeting house, where thanks were given to the Supreme Ruler of the universe, for his kindness to his people, in releasing them from the heavy burdens which were imposed on them, and for continuing their liberties. There was an animated and well adapted discourse delivered by the Rev. Mr. Rowland, from Psalm cxxvi, 3, and the religious exercises were concluded with a beautiful anthem performed by a company of musicians. The assembly returned in like good order as they came to the court house, where his Majesty's health was drank by many hundreds under a royal salute of twenty-one cannon, when the company adjourned to four o'clock. Upon their re-assembling, they drank thirty-two of the most loyal, patriotic and constitutional toasts, under a discharge of seven, five and three cannon, accompanied with the sound of drums, trumpets and the loudest huzzas of the loyal multitude, who were liberally treated by the gentlemen of the town. In the evening 108 sky-rockets, with a bee-hive containing 106 serpents, was played off before the court house, (which was most beautifully illuminated,) with divers other kinds of fireworks. At nine o'clock, there was an elegant boiled collation served up to the company, and at eleven, when every heart was full fraught with joy and loyalty, the company retired. And that the daughters of liberty might not be wholly excluded from rejoicing in a way agreeable to them, the evening after, there was a grand ball given by the gentlemen of the town, at which there was the most brilliant appearance of ladies this town ever saw. The whole was carried on to general satisfaction and without hurtful accident."



The following year, 1767, the event was celebrated on its anniversary, the eighteenth of March. The Gazette of the Saturday following states, that "the morning was ushered in by the ringing of bells and beating of drums." "In the evening a grand ball was given by the young gentlemen of the town, at which there was a very grand appearance of ladies." The day continued to be observed for several years, with demonstrations of joy. In recalling to mind, on this anniversary, the evils and burdens they had escaped, the sons of liberty throughout the colonies, kept alive the spirit of freedom, and prepared a way for that event, which their descendants, in more modern times, deem it their highest duty and pleasure to celebrate on each returning fourth of July.

The parliament of Great Britain, at the repeal of the stamp act, having so wisely resolved that they possessed the power to tax the colonies, in May following resolved to exercise it, by laying a duty on paper, glass, paints, tea, &c. imported into the colonies. This act went into operation, November 20th, 1767, and it met with a most determined opposition from the colonists. Yet it did not require that open opposition which in case of the Stamp-Act, reached almost to treason. The duty was imposed only on imports. The Act did not make it imperative on the colonies to import, and combinations were readily formed, against importations; thus rendering the act nugatory, as related to revenue.

The subject was acted upon in a town meeting in Providence, on the 25th day of November. They



raised a committee to consider and report the most effectual means of promoting the interest of the colonies and of avoiding the payment of these taxes. The committee reported in favor of obtaining subscriptions of the citizens, to an agreement not to import or use certain enumerated articles, after the first day of January then next, but to discountenance the excessive use of certain other articles which could be manufactured in America, and the use of mourning apparel, and encourage home manufactures and the raising of wool and flax. The town unanimously accepted the report, directed the form of subscription to be printed, and appointed the town council a committee to procure signatures to it. The original report is in the files of the city clerk, in the hand writing of the late venerable Moses Brown. The subscription papers are not to be found. The following notice of them was inserted in the Providence Gazette of December 12th.

“The subscription rolls for suppressing the unnecessary and destructive importation of European goods and foreign superfluities, and for the encouragement of industry and economy and manufactures, are now filling up very fast, and there is not the least doubt but that they will be unanimously signed.”

The agreement went into effect on the first day of January, 1768. On the 13th of February, the following advertisement appeared in the Gazette.

“The following tradesmen are wanted in the northern colonies in America, and from the universal spirit which now prevails, for extending our manufactures, there cannot be any doubt but that suitable encouragement would be given them, if they should transport themselves from Great Britain or Ireland, into these delightful regions, quite removed out of the reach of the



paw of oppression ; that is to say : All sorts of tradesmen in the linen and woollen manufacture, stocking weavers, steel makers, nailers, locksmiths, gunsmiths, saw makers, cutlers, file makers, and in general all sorts of workers in the iron way ; clock and watch makers, paper makers, paper stainers, glass makers, makers of blue and white and other sorts of earthen and stone ware, pipe makers, needle and pin makers, wire drawers, workers in brass and copper, buckle makers, button makers, manufacturers of horn, makers of wool cards, brush makers, glue makers, makers of painters' colors, glovers and engravers."

The advertisement then states, that the climate is very salubrious, enumerates many advantages which the tradesmen would enjoy, and annexes a price current of many of the necessities of life. Wheat is stated at two shillings nine pence sterling, rye, two shillings two pence, Indian corn, one shilling six pence, per bushel ; beef, veal and mutton, a penny half-penny, pork, a penny three farthings, butter, five pence, and cheese, three pence, per pound ; salt, one shilling six pence, per bushel ; sugar, twenty seven shillings, per cwt. and firewood, in the cities, eight shillings per cord. The list of tradesmen included several arts in which considerable progress had already been made. The design, so far as regarded these, was to induce more finished workmen, and in greater numbers, to enrich the country with their skill and knowledge ; and the result aimed at, was to render the colonies independent of the mother country for any of the necessities, or even conveniences or luxuries of social life. •

No writer perhaps did more to arouse his countrymen to a sense of impending dangers, than John Dickinson, in a series of letters, published at first in



a Pennsylvania newspaper, over the signature of "A Farmer." They were republished in the Providence Gazette, and in almost every newspaper in the country. The following letter from the freemen of Providence to the author, shows the estimation in which they held his writings. It is inserted here as marking their views, not only of the writer, but of the subjects of his disquisitions.

"SIR—In your retirement, 'near the banks of the river Delaware,' where you are completing, in a rational way, the number of days allotted to you by divine goodness, the consciousness of having employed those talents which God hath bestowed upon you, for the support of our rights, must afford you a satisfaction, vastly exceeding that which is derived to you from the universal approbation of your letters. However, amidst the general acclamations of your praise, the moderator and freemen of the ancient town of Providence cannot be silent; although we would not offend your delicacy or incur the imputation of flattery in expressing our gratitude to you.

Your benevolence to mankind, fully discoverable from your writings, doubtless caused you to address your countrymen, whom you tenderly call "dear and beloved," in a series of letters, wherein you have, with great judgment and in the most spirited and forcible manner, explained their rights and privileges, and vindicated them against such as would reduce these extensive dominions of his majesty to poverty, misery and slavery. This your patriotic exertion in our cause and indeed in the cause of the human race, in some degree, hath rendered you very dear to us, although we know not your person.

We deplore the frailty of human nature, in that it is necessary, that we should be frequently awakened into attention to our duty in matters very plain and incontrovertible, if we would suffer ourselves to consider them. From this inattention to things, evidently the duty and interest of the world, we suppose despotic rule to have originated, and all the train of miseries consequent thereupon.



The virtuous and good man who rouses an injured country from their lethargy and animates them into active and successful endeavors, for casting off the burdens imposed on them and effecting a full enjoyment of the rights of man, which no human creature ought to violate, will merit the warmest expressions of gratitude from his countrymen, for his instrumentality in saving them and their posterity.

As the very design of instituting civil government in the world, was to secure to individuals a quiet enjoyment of their native rights, wherever there is a departure from this great and only end, impious force succeeds. The blessings of a just government and the horrors of brutal violence, are both inexpressible. As the latter is generally brought upon us by degrees, it will be their duty to watch against every, the smallest attempt to inovate an iota in their privileges.

With hearts truly loyal to the King, we feel the greatest concern at divers acts of the British Parliament relative to these colonies. We are clear and unanimous in sentiment, that they are subversive of our liberties and derogatory to the power and dignity of the several legislatures established in America.

Permit us, Sir, to assure you, that we feel ineffable gratitude to you for your letters, at a time when the exercise of great abilities was necessary.

We sincerely wish, that you may see the fruit of your labors. We, on our part, shall be ready at all times to evince to the world, that we will not surrender our privileges to any of our fellow subjects, but will earnestly contend for them, hoping that the Almighty will look upon our righteous contest with gracious approbation. We hope, that the conduct of the colonies on this occasion will be peaceable, prudent, firm and joint, such as will show their loyalty to the best of sovereigns, and that they know what they owe to themselves, as well as to Great Britian.

Town meeting, June 20, 1768.

Signed by order,

JAMES ANGELL, Town clerk.

To the author of a series of  
letters signed A Farmer."



To this he returned the following answer :

“To the Moderator and Freemen of the Town of Providence,  
in New-England.

Gentlemen—Words can but very faintly express the Sentiments of Respect and Gratitude with which I receive the Kindness and Honor of your late Address to Me.

“The consciousness of having employed” myself “in the Support of our Rights,” through a dutiful Devotion to my Country, “affords” me indeed a great “Satisfaction;” Yet it would be an unpardonable Affectation in Me to pretend, that such “Praises” as You have bestowed, by such Persons bestowed, did not give me a very sincere Delight; For to be esteemed and commended by those, who themselves deserve to be esteemed and commended, is one of the invaluable Rewards of well-meant Actions.

So highly I prize the approbation of the Moderator and Freemen of “the ancient town of Providence,” that I shall constantly and zealously endeavor to merit its continuance; and so much I interest Myself in your Prosperity, that I most heartily wish, your generous Resolution “not to surrender your privileges to any of your Fellow Subjects,” may meet with a success equal to such Virtue.

May You, Gentlemen, as I doubt not but you will, by your wise and spirited Conduct, exhibit a noble Example, demonstrating, that these Colonies may, at the same Time, “shew their Loyalty to the best of Sovereigns, and that they know what they owe to themselves, as well as to Great Britain.

July 7th, 1768.

A FARMER.”

(Direction on envelope.)

“To the Moderator and Freemen of the Town  
of Providence, in New-England.”

In July, 1768, the sons of liberty were called upon to attend the dedication of the tree of liberty. Almost every town then had either its liberty tree or its liberty pole. The liberty tree of Providence was a little north of the north side of Olney street, in front of a public house kept there by Capt. Joseph



Olney. Samuel Thurber, in a note kindly communicated to me when in his 81st year, says :

"He" Captain Olney "had a large, old fashioned, two story, low studded house, in the form of an L, with a large yard in front. In this yard stood the largest elm tree that I ever saw. A slight of steps was erected, leading perhaps twenty feet up to where three or four limbs set out. There, a convenient seat was fixed for, say, ten or twelve people to sit in and enjoy themselves in the shade."

The dedication of this tree took place on the 25th day of July. A large concourse of people assembled. An animated discourse was delivered, from the seat or summer house on the tree, by Silas Downer. After which the people in the summer house, laying their hands on the tree, the gentleman who gave the discourse pronounced these words aloud.

"We do, in the name and behalf of all the true sons of liberty in America, Great Britian, Ireland, Corsica, or wheresoever they may be dispersed throughout the world, dedicate and solemnly devote this tree to be a tree of liberty. May all our councils and deliberations, under its venerable branches, be guided by wisdom, and directed for the support and maintainance of that liberty, which our renowned forefathers sought out and found under trees and in the wilderness. May it long flourish, and may the sons of liberty often repair hither, to confirm and strengthen each other; when they look toward this sacred elm, may they be penetrated with a sense of their duty to themselves and their posterity; and may they, like the house of David, grow stronger and stronger, while their enemies, like the house of Saul, shall grow weaker and weaker. Amen."

This discourse was afterwards published in a pamphlet, a copy of which is in the possession of the Historical Society. The liberty tree of Providence was long since cut down, but the principles that in-



duced its dedication have survived. They led to the subsequent independence of the colonies and all the blessings which have resulted from it. The ruthless hand of time can destroy the monuments which man erects or consecrates, but it possesses no power over the principles which hallow such monuments. They will exist, and flourish, and increase, when the ruins of the monuments themselves, shall cover the graves of those who erected or consecrated them.

It seems that further measures were deemed necessary to counteract the measures of the British government, imposing duties on goods imported into the colonies. "The merchants, traders, farmers and mechanics, and in general, all the sons of liberty, in this and the neighboring towns," were desired to meet at the liberty tree, on the 25th of July 1769, to consult and agree upon effectual measures, to discourage the importation and consumption of European goods. What was done at this meeting, does not appear. Another meeting was holden, on the 17th of October following. The occasion of this meeting was the expected arrival of a vessel from England, with British goods, imported contrary to the agreement of December 2d, 1767. On the 24th of October, a town meeting was called on the subject, and it was then resolved,

"That they would not, directly nor indirectly, from that time until the act imposing duties upon glass, paper, &c. shall be repealed, give any orders for importing, by land or water, into this colony, either for sale, or for their own or families' use, or purchase of any other person importing, any of the articles enumerated in an agreement, entered into and signed by a number of the inhabitants of this town, on the 2d day of December 1767,



similar to one entered into, about the same time, by the town of Boston; and that they would strictly adhere to the measures thereby adopted, by endeavoring, most effectually, to discountenance luxury and extravagance, in the use of British and foreign manufactures and superfluities, and by exerting their utmost endeavors to promote and encourage, by all laudable methods, our own manufactures, more especially the articles of wool and flax, the natural produce and staple of this colony.

And, whereas, several merchants of this town have given orders for, and daily expect from England, in the *Snow Tristram*, *David Shand*, master, divers parcels of goods, among which are many of the articles enumerated in the aforementioned agreement not to be imported, they did then, in the presence of the town meeting, cheerfully agree and engage to deliver up, all such enumerated articles, which they shall import, in said *Snow*, or by any other way whatever, to a committee of three gentlemen appointed by said meeting, for that purpose, who are to receive and store the same, till the aforesaid act, imposing duties, &c. shall be repealed."

Measures of this character, were pursued in most parts of the colonies. Their effects were so sensibly felt by the manufacturers and merchants in England, as to induce a repeal of some parts of the obnoxious acts of Parliament. The ministry consented to this, hoping, thereby, to satisfy their own citizens at home, and to distract the proceedings of the colonists, by exciting jealousies among them. At all times, in every colony, there were some individuals, who were ready to sacrifice, even the liberty of the country, to their own avarice. These were constantly evading the non-importation agreements, and proposing alterations in them. The partial repeal of the obnoxious acts, furnished them with a pretence for selling the prohibited articles. In a communication of the *Providence Gazette* of Janu-



ary 20th 1770, some of the Boston Merchants are accused of breaking the non-importation agreement. Such reports, induced a meeting of merchants there, when it was agreed still to adhere to it.

It seems that some of the merchants of Providence came to a different conclusion. This led to a special town meeting, on the 31st of May, which resolved,

“ That no general importation of European and India goods, from Great Britian, take place in this town, until a general importation take place in the neighboring colonies.

It appearing, that at the late meeting of a number of the merchants of this town, when the non-importation agreement was vacated, by a majority of those present, they were unacquainted with the sentiments of the neighboring colonies respecting that matter, and as it appears, the proposed alteration of said agreement, to the exclusion of tea only, is not satisfactory to the inhabitants of this town, nor to the neighboring colonies, nor will it have the desired effect, it is the opinion of this meeting, that the vacation of the said agreement was too precipitate, and as such, we apprehend, would not have been done by them, had the matter been postponed to this time. Voted, that it is the unanimous opinion of this meeting, that no goods, excepting such as are allowed by said agreement, ought, by any means, to be imported into this town, until the duty on tea be repealed, or the other governments, generally, import; and that a committee be appointed to wait on the three houses of merchants who are for importing and who have sent for their goods, and use every argument to induce them to countermand their orders, and report their doings at the annual town meeting, to be holden on Monday next; and to prevent any disagreeable sentiments arising in the minds of our neighbors, against the inhabitants of this town, on account of the said late resolution, the proceedings of this meeting are hereby ordered to be published in the next Gazette, that the public may be assured we shall harmonize in the united endeavors of this continent, in this and every other measure so salutary to the general welfare.



Voted, that Stephen Hopkins, Darius Sessions, Ephraim Bowen, John Jenckes, Nicholas Brown, Nicholas Cooke and Job Sweeting, be and are hereby appointed a committee for the aforesaid purposes."

The following vote was also passed at the same meeting.

"Whereas there are some persons in the towns of Boston and Newport, who have imported goods, contrary to the general agreements of the colonies, it is voted and resolved, that if any person or persons shall purchase, directly or indirectly, any such goods so imported, from thence or elsewhere, and bring them into this town, either for sale or their own use, their names be published in the Gazette, that they may, thereby, receive the displeasure and discouragement of their injured neighbors and country; and that Jabez Bowen jr., John Brown, John Jenckes, Joseph Bucklin and Benjamin Cushing jr. be, and are hereby appointed a committee of inspection for that purpose."

The committee appointed to wait on the merchants, reported, at an adjourned town meeting, on the 6th day of June, that the merchants had agreed to countermand all goods, except those enumerated in a list then produced.

"The said list not being satisfactory, a dispute arose and a vote was called in the following manner, viz: Whether the importers should be permitted to import agreeable to the new list exhibited by the committee, or continue under the restrictions of their former agreement of October 1769? Upon a division there appeared for the new list, only 19, and for the old list 39."

Importers were however permitted to give orders for any articles not included in the old list, which the merchants of Boston, New-York, or Philadelphia, imported, in consequence of their agreements. The record concludes, "it therefore fully appears to be the sense of the town in general, that we har-



monize with the other colonies in their united agreements."

Notwithstanding these proceedings, reports injurious to the town were widely circulated. The following vote, passed at the regular town meeting on the last Tuesday in August, shows the extent of these reports, and how ill founded they were.

"Whereas the committee of trade for this town, laid before this meeting, a letter, from the committee of trade in Boston, desiring the directions of this meeting, in giving an answer to the same, the town, having considered thereon, do vote, that the committee of this town, inform them, that, as a corporate body, we have constantly and strictly adhered to our votes respecting the non-importation agreement, and that the treatment of this town by the Southern and Western colonies, in refusing to trade with us, is unjust and without any foundation; and in particular, the Philadelphians paying no regard to the letter from the merchants of this town, is injurious and highly reflecting upon the sincerity and veracity of the merchants here; and that this town, notwithstanding the hard usage they have met with from the Southern and Western colonies, will yet adhere to their former resolutions, and will exert themselves in taking all prudent methods, in storing goods, if any shall come to this town; and they do expect the said colonies will acknowledge their mistake and open a free trade with them as heretofore, and that they will not themselves break the agreement by importing and selling goods."

This vote being communicated to the committee of trade in Boston, was laid before a meeting of merchants and others concerned in trade, on the 5th day of September, when the following vote was passed by that meeting.

"Voted, that it appears to this body that the town of Providence hath faithfully adhered to the non-importation agreement, and that all reports to the contrary are without foundation."

A copy of this vote was forwarded to the commit-



tee of merchants at Providence. This agreement continued in force until October following, when it was rescinded, apparently by common consent.

In March 1772, the superior court of the colony in the county of Providence, were engaged in the trial of a most interesting cause, involving the legality of the non-importation agreements. The committee of inspection in the city of New-York, finding one David Hills, of Wrentham, Massachusetts, vending goods embraced in the non-importation agreements, induced him to deposit them in the hands of a merchant whom they named, to be re-delivered to him on the repeal of the acts of Parliament. The evening after they were so deposited, they were taken from the hands of the depositary by the populace, and burnt in the streets. Hills commenced an action for the value of the goods, against some of the committee, whose property he found in Rhode-Island, alledging that he was compelled by threats to part with them. The most able counsel in the colony were employed on both sides. The claim of the plaintiff, was one not entitled to popular favor. The business in which he was engaged, was one which the whole community, with one accord, had decided to be unfavorable to the cause of liberty.—The judges of both courts before which the cause was tried, held their offices by annual appointment. The jurors in each court, were returned from the several towns in the county, and did not receive any charge from the court; yet the plaintiff recovered in both courts, by the verdict of the juries. Under such circumstances, such a decision, of such a cause,



was very honorable to both court and jury. The reverence that they paid to law and justice, was such as to lead them to a conclusion against their own practices, and prejudices, and in favor of a stranger, whose conduct they condemned, as injurious to the best interests of the whole country.

In the spring of 1772, the armed schooner *Gaspee*, commanded by Lieutenant William Duddingston, arrived in Narragansett Bay, to aid in enforcing the revenue laws. These laws had never been much respected in this colony; of course, the visit of this vessel, on such an errand, was far from being acceptable to the inhabitants, especially as her commander seemed inclined strictly to discharge his duty. Difficulties soon arose between the governor of the colony and Lieutenant Duddingston, in relation to their several duties; the effect of which, was, to make the latter still more punctilious and energetic in relation to the revenue laws. He would not allow even the river packets to pass up to Providence, without bringing them to; and, in some instances, he disregarded the very laws he came to execute. On the 8th of June, the sloop *Hannah*, Captain Benjamin Lindsey, touched at Newport, on her way from New-York to Providence, and reported her cargo to the custom house, then the only one in the colony. On the day following, she started on her way up the river. The *Gaspee* followed her. Captain Lindsey crowded sail to escape, and knowing well the channel, crossed Namquit Point, where there was water enough for the *Hannah*, but not enough for the *Gaspee*. The *Gaspee* followed him



and ran aground on the point. The Hannah pursued her course to Providence, and on her arrival, Capt. Lindsey gave notice of the situation in which he left the Gaspee. Namquit is about six miles below Providence, on the west shore. In the evening of the same day, eight long boats, filled with ship masters and merchants, citizens of Providence, of high respectability, boarded the Gaspee, took out her crew and landed them at Pawtuxet, and set the vessel on fire. On approaching the Gaspee, the Lieutenant discharged his pistols at them, and, in return, was wounded by a musket ball, in the left groin. The vessel was wholly destroyed. The boats returned to Providence before morning.

As soon as Gov. Wanton became informed of this transaction, he issued his proclamation, offering a reward of £100, for the discovery of any person engaged in it. After taking affidavits in relation to it, he transmitted an account of the whole affair, and of the measures he had pursued in relation to it, to the British government. They issued a proclamation, offering a reward of £500, for the discovery of any person engaged in it, and £500, additional, for the discovery of the "captain" of the enterprize, or "the sheriff of the county of Kent," which last title was assumed on the occasion, by one of the most active among the assailants. Subsequently, they appointed a special court of commissioners to inquire into the matter. They met at Newport. But neither rewards nor judicial investigation, led to any discovery of the perpetrators of the deed. Notwithstanding so many were personally engaged in the



transaction, that they were called together by beat of drum through the streets, that they met at Sabin's tavern, then one of the public houses more frequented than any other in the town, that they embarked in their boats early in the evening, and without disguise of any kind, no person could be found base enough to betray them. John Brown, well known as one of the most enterprising and wealthy merchants in New-England, took an active part in this affair, if he did not originate it. Abraham Whipple, afterward a captain in the continental navy, had the command of the squadron. The last survivor of the company was Ephraim Bowen. He died in 1840.

Here was the first open and armed opposition to the forces of his majesty, and here the first blood shed in the revolutionary struggle. A Providence man fired the first gun, and at a company of Providence men was the first ball discharged in that contest.

The omnipotence of the British Parliament had long been exerted in vain, to compel the colonists to pay taxes imposed without their consent. The taxes were evaded, by the non-importation agreements. No power could compel them to import goods subject to the obnoxious duties. When compelled to retrace their steps, in 1770, and to repeal the duties on all articles, except tea, they still found it impossible to compel the colonies to use that article. They would not even drink tea, on compulsion. In 1773, resort was had to the extraordinary measure of permitting the East India Company to export their teas to America, with a drawback of all the duties paid in England. Aware as the friends of liberty



were, that it would be impossible to stop the sale of the article, if once introduced, they came at once to the conclusion, that it should not be landed in the country. This they were unable to effect in Boston, the consignees being friends of the government. They then came to the decision of destroying it; and on the evening of the 16th December 1773, they emptied 342 chests of it into Boston harbor.

The inhabitants of Providence were not called upon to act so decisively, in relation to the importation of tea, as were those of Boston. No teas were shipped to this port. Soon after the Boston tea party, to wit, on the 19th of January 1774, a town meeting was called, at which the following resolutions were passed.

“Inasmuch as the British parliament have undertaken to raise a revenue in the American Colonies by a duty upon tea; We, the freemen of the Town of Providence, legally assembled in town meeting, cannot be silent on so interesting an occasion. Should we, in this case, omit to assert and express the firmest resolutions to vindicate our rights, it might be construed as a cession of them into the hands of those who have wantonly invaded them in this instance.

We do therefore, in justice to ourselves, our posterity and the sister colonies, openly and publicly make the following declaration; hoping, that by a vigorous exertion in conformity thereto, we may, in some measure, contribute towards escaping the dreadful train of evils, which must be the consequence of a tame submission to any invasion of American freedom. We lament any seeming acquiescence which hath, at any time heretofore, been made in these colonies, under parliamentary usurpations of our liberties; but as any such concessions were made through fear, inattention, or without a due consideration of our rights, we strongly protest against any precedent being made thereby, to our disadvantage. When we consider, that many of our ances-



tors removed from Britain and planted themselves here; that the religion, language and customs of the two countries are mostly similar, and that there hath been a long intercourse of trade and commerce between them, we are willing and ever desirous of a continuance of connexion between the Colonies and Britain, if it may be had upon terms, in any measure, equal. Upon full consideration of the matter upon which we have met, we do resolve,

1. That the disposal of their own property, is the inherent right of freemen; that there can be no property in that which another can, of right, take from us, without our consent; that the claim of Parliament to tax America, is, in other words, a claim of right to levy contributions on us at pleasure.

2. That the duty imposed by Parliament on tea, landed in America, is a tax on the Americans, or levying contributions on them without their consent.

3. That the express purpose for which the tax is levied on the Americans, namely, for the support of government, administration of justice and defence of his Majesty's dominions in America, has a direct tendency to render assemblies useless, and to introduce arbitrary government and slavery.

4. That a virtuous and steady opposition to this ministerial plan of governing America, is absolutely necessary, to preserve even the shadow of liberty, and is a duty which every freeman in America owes to his country, to himself, and to his posterity.

5. That the resolution lately entered into by the East India Company to send out their tea to America, subject to the payment of duties, on its being landed here, is an open attempt to enforce this ministerial plan, and a violent attack upon the liberties of America.

6. That it is the duty of every American to oppose this attempt.

7. That whoever shall, directly or indirectly, countenance this attempt, or in any wise aid or abet in unloading, receiving or vending the tea sent, or to be sent out by the East India Company, while it remains subject to the payment of a duty here, is an enemy to his country.

8. That no tea belonging to the East India Company, or any



other person subject to a duty, or dutied tea, shall be unladed here, or brought by land.

9. That this town will co-operate with the other towns in this colony, and with all the other colonies, in a resolute stand, as well against every other unconstitutional measure, as the tea act in particular.

10. That Samuel Nightingale, Esq., Jabez Bowen, Esq., and Messrs. John Brown, John Updike, John Jenckes, John Mathewson and Daniel Cahoon, or the major part of them, be a committee to correspond with the towns in this and the neighboring governments, on all such matters as shall be thought to affect the liberties of America.

Voted, that this town highly approve of the proceedings of their brethren of Boston, Philadelphia and New-York, in their spirited and resolute opposition made to the introduction of tea, while subject to a duty laid by Parliament; and that our thanks be given them for the same.

Voted, that the committee wait on all the importers of English goods, in this town, and inform them of the resolutions which the town have entered into respecting tea while subject to a duty: and if any of them have ordered any tea to come next spring, that they be desired to send counter orders immediately.

Voted, that the foregoing proceedings be published in the next Providence Gazette."

The committee proceeded immediately to the discharge of their duties. They found that only one chest of tea had been ordered, and that that order had been countermanded before the town meeting, and that only nine chests, on which a duty had been paid, had been imported since the non-importation agreement was rescinded. The rest of the towns in the colony passed similar resolutions, within a short time after this.

The colonies made common cause with Massachusetts, in opposing the measures adopted by Par-



liament, against that colony, in consequence of the destruction of tea in Boston harbor. They felt too, that the crisis required a closer union between them, and a general Congress was suggested.

The first act of any body of men in favor of this measure, may be found in the proceedings of the town meeting of Providence, holden May 17. The following resolution was passed at that meeting.

“Resolved, that this town will heartily join with the Province of the Massachusetts Bay, and the other colonies, in such measures, as shall be generally agreed on by the colonies, for the protecting and securing their invaluable natural rights and privileges, and transmitting the same to the latest posterity. That the deputies of this town be requested to use their influence, at the approaching session of the General Assembly, of this colony, for promoting a Congress, as soon as may be, of the Representatives of the General Assemblies of the several colonies and provinces of North America, for establishing the firmest union, and adopting such measures as to them shall appear the most effectual, to answer that important purpose: and to agree upon proper methods for executing the same. That the committee of correspondence of this town, be desired to assure the town of Boston, that we consider ourselves greatly interested in the present alarming conduct of the British Parliament, towards them, and view the whole English American colonies equally concerned in the event; and that we will, with the utmost firmness, act accordingly, whenever any plan shall be agreed on. In the mean time, we are of opinion that an universal stoppage of all trade with Great Britain, Ireland, Africa and the West Indies, until such time as the port of Boston shall be reinstated in its former privileges, &c., will be the best expedient in the case, and that a proper time should be generally agreed on for the same, universally, to take place.”

The deputies of the town obeyed the instructions contained in these resolutions, and the General As-



sembly, at June session, appointed Stephen Hopkins and Samuel Ward, delegates from this colony to a continental Congress. As a proof of the unanimity that prevailed, it should be recollected, that these two gentlemen had, for a long series of years, been rival candidates for the office of Governor of the colony, and that the parties were so nearly balanced that they alternately filled the gubernatorial chair.

There were two other acts passed at the same town meeting, which prove that the inhabitants were true to the principles of liberty they professed. The first is as follows :

“Whereas, the inhabitants of America are engaged in the preservation of their rights and liberties, and as personal liberty is an essential part of the natural rights of mankind, the deputies of this town are directed to use their endeavors to obtain an act of the General Assembly prohibiting the importation of negro slaves into this colony, and that all negroes born in this colony should be free after attaining to a certain age.”

At the session of the Assembly in June, an act was passed prohibiting the future importation of slaves into the colony. The third resolution also relates to the subject of domestic slavery. They felt bound to enforce the law of the colony, for the benefit of the creditors of the deceased, but justice and consistency forbade their participating in any gain to be derived from the unwilling labor of their fellow men. It is as follows :

“Whereas Jacob Shoemaker, late of Providence, died intestate, and hath left six negroes, four of whom are infants, and there being no heir to the said Jacob, in this town or colony, the said negroes have fallen to this town by law, provided no heir should appear. Therefore,



It is voted, by this meeting, that it is unbecoming the character of freemen to enslave the said negroes, and they do hereby, give up all claim of right or property in them, the said negroes, or either of them. And it is hereby recommended to the town council, to take the said negroes under their protection, and to bind the small children to some masters and mistresses. And in case there should not be personal estate of the said Jacob Shoemaker, sufficient to pay his just debts, it is further recommended to said council to bind out either, or both, of the adult negroes, for that purpose."

The Assembly at May, ordered a census to be taken of the inhabitants of the colony. The whole number was ascertained to be 59,686. The population of Providence consisted of

White Males,	above 16 years of age,	1,219.
"	" under " "	" 850.
" Females,	above " "	" 1,049.
"	" under " "	" 832.
Indians,		68.
Negroes,		303.

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Total, 4,321.

The number of dwelling houses was 421, and of families, 655.

In August, the following instructions were given to the deputies of this town in the General Assembly.

"Gentlemen, the sufferings and distresses of the people of the town of Boston, occasioned by a relentless execution of that cruel edict for blocking up the port, awaken our attention and excite our compassion. Their cause is our cause, and unless aid and succor be afforded them, they may be discouraged into a hurtful submission, and ministerial vengeance may be next directed against this colony, and in the end alight upon all. You are, therefore, requested to use your endeavors, at the next ses-



sion of the General Assembly, to procure a grant to be made from this colony of such a sum of money as they may think fit, toward relieving and mitigating the difficulties and distresses, which that town must experience from the operation of that most unrighteous inhibition, the hostile manner of carrying the same into force and a general arrest of their liberties.

Permit us to observe, that in doing this, it will be evidenced that as a community we would do unto others as we would they should do unto us under a like circumstance; and that it will be a greater testimony of unanimity in the general concerns of America, in this day of struggle and danger, than private contributions, and far more equal."

Liberal contributions were sent them from all parts of the country. Many of the inhabitants removed to other places. Among those who came to Providence was John Simpson, hardware merchant. He rendered himself obnoxious, by espousing the cause of despotism. On the morning of the 21st of August, he found his doors and window-shutters, tarred and feathered. He prudently returned to Boston. A Mr. DeShazro, tin-plate worker, arrived here a few days afterwards, but the inhabitants being apprised that he was an enemy to the liberties of his country, intimated to him that he could not continue here in safety, and on the following day he returned to Boston. These circumstances induced the town, on the 30th of August, to pass the following resolution.

"It is resolved by this meeting, that this town ought not to be made the asylum of any person or persons, of whatever town, place or city, within the British dominions, whose principles and practices, being inimical to the liberties of our country and its happy constitution, have rendered or shall render them obnoxious to the inhabitants of such place or places from which they may emigrate; and that all such ought to be discouraged,



by every prudent and legal measure ; and the honorable town council are hereby requested to exert themselves, for the removal and ejection of all such persons, so far as by law they may be warranted ; as their being admitted amongst us may tend greatly to endanger the peace, order and tranquility of the town, which has been manifested by recent instances."

The following day another town meeting was holden, the cause and proceedings of which are embodied in the following vote.

" Whereas, on the evening of the 30th of August last, a number of persons imprudently and tumultuously assembled themselves together, in a manner that did disturb the peace and order of the town ; and as such proceedings are of evil example and repugnant to the good and wholesome laws of this town and colony, which if executed, we deem sufficient to support the quiet and tranquility thereof ; and such doings being ever derogatory to the honor of the town and subversive of our rights and liberties, this town do protest against such proceedings, and desire the civil magistrates therein to exert themselves to their utmost, to prevent and suppress all such unhappy disturbances in future, in doing which they may rely upon the aid and support of the freemen and well disposed inhabitants, at all times."

This prudent act undoubtedly prevented the occurrence in this town, of many of those scenes, which were subsequently acted in different parts of the country. By insisting upon the supremacy of their laws, they honored both themselves and the cause in which they were engaged.

The following month, the Light Infantry and Cadet Companies of this town were required, by the Sheriff of the county of Kent, at East-Greenwich, to disperse a mob there assembled, and threatening to destroy that town. An express arrived here about two in the morning, and these two companies reached the place of destination at nine the same morning. It seems



that the inhabitants of East-Greenwich had charged Stephen Arnold of Warwick, one of the judges of the inferior court in that county, with propagating principles unfriendly to American liberty and had hung him in effigy. He had called together his friends, to the number of some hundreds, to avenge himself for these insults. After the arrival of the military, he acknowledged that he had been indiscreet in his proceedings, being actuated by fear and resentment. He signed a paper, acknowledging these facts and declaring himself to be a friend to the liberties of his country, and that he disapproved of those measures which were intended to impose any taxes on America without her consent. Upon this, and his promising to discourage all such unlawful assemblies for the future, peace was restored and the military returned home.

The town in November, authorised their committee of correspondence to receive £125, from the town treasurer, to be transmitted to the distressed inhabitants of Boston. Similar donations were sent from other towns, and from patriotic individuals, for the relief the inhabitants then suffering under the provisions of the Boston Port Bill.

The committee of correspondence, of Providence, held a meeting on the 24th day of November. The following were their proceedings at that meeting.

“The committee of correspondence for the town of Providence, having met together, this day, and taking into consideration an article in the Association made at the late American Continental Congress, relative to improving the breed of sheep, increasing their number, killing them as sparingly as may be, especially those of the most profitable kind, and not exporting



them to the West Indies, do earnestly entreat and exhort, all persons within this town, to conform themselves exactly to this good and wise regulation, as it will have a manifest tendency to bring about and secure that freedom and happiness, which we so greatly contend for. We would observe in particular, that those who shall so far act in opposition to the united sentiments of all America, collected in General Congress, as to kill any lambs, or young sheep, without the most evident necessity, or export any sheep at all to the West Indies, ought to be discountenanced, as persons who counteract the general welfare."

They did more than resolve and publish their resolutions. Hearing that some merchants here were about shipping sheep to the West Indies, they waited on them personally. The merchants, supposing that by the association agreed to by the continental Congress, they could export until the first day of December, had purchased a number of sheep, expressly for the purpose of exportation, but on learning that a different construction was put on the article, they immediately gave orders that they should not be shipped. About the same time, the bearers at a funeral accepted of gloves; upon recollecting that this was contrary to the recommendation of Congress, after the corpse was interred, they immediately returned them, and the merchant of whom they had been purchased, received them back again.

These incidents may seem like trifles. They were so regarded by the friends of the British ministry. Had they been duly weighed, trifling as they were, they ought to have convinced every one that the colonists were in earnest, and being so, were invincible.

What cannot a people do, when impelled by pa-



triotism, when self-interest gives place to the public good, when private emolument and gain lose their charms, being in opposition to the general welfare? When any people are so virtuous as to yield implicit obedience to the simple recommendations of their rulers, upon the ground that the well being of the community depends on them, they may be annihilated, but not subjugated.

In pursuance of the recommendations of the Continental Congress, a committee of inspection was appointed by the town, on the 17th of December. It consisted of William Earl, Nicholas Cooke, Benjamin Man, Zephaniah Andrews, Arthur Fenner, jr. Ambrose Page, Nicholas Power, George Corlis, Paul Allen, David Lawrence, Joseph Russell, Job Sweeting, Joseph Bucklin, Jonathan Arnold, Bernard Eddy, Aaron Mason, Joseph Brown and Nathaniel Wheaton. They met at the chamber of the town council, on the third Wednesday of every month. At their first meeting, on the 24th day of December 1774, they published a synopsis of the association of Congress, designating the duties imposed and recommended by it. They then add,—

“In all and every of which matters, we request all persons in this town, to yield the strictest conformity, and in general, a full observance of every thing at large in the proceedings of the Congress, as they would avoid such contempt and inconvenience, as otherwise they would incur; recommending a frequent perusal of the said proceedings, to the end that they may fully know their duty with respect to said agreement, entered into as a great means for extricating this country from impending ruin and slavery.

And we earnestly request all persons both in town and country, who deal or trade in this place, and all others, to give us in-



formation of the names of such as shall violate any part of the association, that they may meet with such discouragement as the Congress have directed.

Voted, that all persons who shall in future bring goods into this town, either by land or water, shall produce a certificate from the committee of inspection, for the place from whence the goods may be brought, of their being imported before the first day of December ; or that they were bought at vendue, according to the regulation of the American Congress, as contained in the 10th article.

Voted, that the chairman of this committee, or any three of the members, be empowered to give certificates to any person who shall apply, for goods imported into this town agreeable to the regulations of Congress."

Congress, by the same association, agreed not to use or purchase tea, after the first day of March 1775. As that day approached, the committee issued the following address to the inhabitants of Providence.

" We, the committee of inspection, of the town of Providence, besides the notice we have already given for your exact conformity to the association agreement of the General Congress, think it our duty, at this time, when the first day of March is at hand, to remind you, in special, that in the third article it is solemnly agreed and associated, not to purchase or use any East India tea whatever, from and after the first day of March next. This measure, among others, was thought necessary to gain redress of those grievances which threaten destruction to the lives, liberty and property of his majesty's subjects in North America. We hope that there will not be found in this town, any violator of this solemn agreement, respecting the purchase and use of a needless article, which hath proved so ruinous to the liberty, interest and health of the people. The united sense of the colonies in this matter, manifested in a general Congress, approved and ratified by the several governments, and this, in particular, we look upon to be equally obligatory with any other regulation entered into for common good ; and that no person can be coun-



tenanted in a departure therefrom, or in acting such part in society, under the pretence of liberty, as must, by the most evident consequences, be followed with the greatest mischiefs.

We, therefore, most earnestly desire of all persons in this town, a most strict adherence to this most important regulation; that they do not purchase, use or suffer to be purchased or used by any person, for or under them, any India tea, after the first of March next; and that they would give information to us of the names of all such as shall sell, buy or use, or suffer to be sold, bought or used, any India tea, after the said time, that they may be published in the Gazette, so as that they may be known and universally condemned as enemies of American liberty, and that all dealings with them be broken off."

To manifest their determination to conform to this address, the people assembled and burnt their tea, in the market place, on the second day of March. The solemnities of the occasion are thus described:

"On Thursday last, about 12 o'clock at noon, the town crier gave the following notice through the town.

"At five o'clock, this afternoon, a quantity of India tea will be burnt in the market place. All true friends of their country, lovers of freedom, and haters of shackles and handcuffs, are hereby invited to testify their good dispositions, by bringing and casting into the fire a needless herb, which, for a long time, hath been highly detrimental to our liberty, interest and health."

About five in the afternoon, a great number of inhabitants assembled at the place, where there were brought in about three hundred pounds weight of tea, by the firm contenders for the true interests of America. A large fire was kindled, and the tea cast into it. A tar barrel, Lord North's speech, Rivington's, and Mills and Hicks' newspapers, and divers other ingredients entered into the composition. There appeared great cheerfulness in committing to destruction so pernicious an article. Many worthy women, from a conviction of the evil tendency of continuing the habit of tea drinking, made free-will offerings of their respective stocks of the hurtful trash. On this occasion, the bells were tolled; but it is referred to the learned, whether



tolling or ringing would have been most proper. Whilst the tea was burning, a spirited son of liberty went along the streets with his brush and lamp black, and obliterated or unpainted the word "tea" on the shop signs.

Thus the funeral of Madam Souchong, was observed. She was a native of China, and after travelling into several parts of Europe, where she found great notice among the great and luxurious, she took a trip to America. She came into this country about forty years ago, and hath been greatly caressed by all ranks. She lived in reputation for several years, but, at length, became a common prostitute among the lowest class of people. She became very poor, and her price was so lowered that any one might have her company for almost nothing. The quality deserted her, and by hard living, in log houses and wigwams, her health was impaired. Broken spirits and hysterics seized her, and she died on the first of March 1775, at midnight."

Had the biographer of Madam Souchong waited but a short time, he would have ascertained that she did not die at the time he stated. A sudden catalepsy seized her, at the time of her supposed death, occasioned no doubt by the heavy load of chains for America which the British ministry laid on her shoulders. She partially recovered in 1776, but in 1783, wholly regained her lost powers, and has remained from that time to the present, as great a favorite as when she first came to this country.

These and the subsequent proceedings of the committee, are simply their recommendations of the course of conduct to be pursued. They had not the form, nor did they pretend to have the binding force and authority, of laws. In many respects they must have greatly interfered with individual interests, and in all, with that control over and use of private property, which the laws of the land conferred on the owners. They had the sanction of public opinion.



The committee were merely the organ to announce that opinion, and it was that, embodied in their recommendations, which gave them life and power. All experience has shown, that laws enacted in a free government, against public opinion, cannot be executed, whatever may be the penalties annexed to breaches of them. Unless immediately repealed, they will be either openly and successfully resisted, or secretly evaded. They want the spirit of law, and are but a dead letter. These recommendations had the spirit, but not the form, and they compelled obedience by their own inherent power. Sensible of the value and importance of such a committee, and satisfied with the manner in which they had executed their duties, the town, at their annual town meeting in June, re-appointed them, with the exception of George Corlis, and added to their number Samuel Nightingale, jr. Jabez Bowen, John Brown, John Updike, John Jenckes, John Mathewson, David Calhoone, James Angell and James Black. A large proportion of the committee were the principal merchants in the town. They entered immediately on the discharge of their duties, and on the 12th of June passed the following resolve.

“It is voted, that all persons, venders of goods and merchandise in this town, sell the same, at the same rates they have been respectively accustomed to do. And if any vender of goods or merchandise, shall sell any such goods or merchandise on higher terms than usual, or shall in any manner or by any device whatsoever, depart from the ninth resolve of the Continental Congress relative to venders of goods, that then and in such case, the public ought to neglect dealing with such persons or



his or her factor or agent, at any time thereafter, for any commodity whatsoever.

And, it is further voted, that if any person shall sell any goods or merchandise at a higher rate than they were heretofore accustomed to do, the purchaser is hereby directed to give notice thereof to this committee, and to produce the goods or merchandise so purchased, in order that such person's name may be published in the Providence Gazette.

And, it is further voted, that Messrs. John Updike, Samuel Nightingale jr., Paul Allen and James Black, merchants, be and they are hereby appointed a committee, to visit the several shop keepers in this town, to examine the several prices of their goods, and recommend to them that they sell the same at the usual prices ; and if they find any goods marked at a higher rate than usual, they are to make report to this committee."

Nothing but the peculiar circumstances of the times would justify such a resolution as this. A people who would submit to it rather than pay a three-penny duty on tea, are entitled to our highest praise. resolution, passed on the 17th of July, breathes the same spirit. It was as follows.

"It is voted, by this committee, that no mutton or lamb be killed and brought to market in this town after the 22d day of July inst., until the first day of September next ; and that if any person shall, after this public notice, bring to market, or expose to sale, any mutton or lamb, within the said limited time, the same shall be seized and given to the poor."

These proceedings manifest the spirit which secured the liberty and independence of the colonies. Men who could design such measures, could not be slaves, and nothing but the purest patriotism, would ever induce a community of freemen to submit to them.

There were some individuals, undoubtedly, who secretly evaded them, but very few were the instan-



ces of open violation. Public opinion was too unanimous on the subject to be openly opposed. The author has been informed of one instance in which the committee of correspondence took a quarter of lamb from before the fire where it was roasting, and sent it to the work house, to gladden its inmates, without asking the owner's consent or waiting the result of a judicial investigation of the matter.

Providence, at this juncture, was not behind other places in making warlike preparations. It does not appear that any companies of minute men were organized here. Their place was supplied by the Independent Companies, so called.—These consisted of volunteers from the militia, incorporated by the General Assembly and possessing certain privileges, among the most important of which was, that of choosing their own officers, subject only to approval by the Governor, or Governor and assistants. They were not attached to any particular regiments of the militia, nor subject to the general or regimental officers; but they received their orders immediately from the Governor, as Captain General. Hence the name of Independent Companies. An artillery company had been incorporated in 1744. In June 1774, they assumed the name of the Cadet Company, by permission of the General Assembly, and were commanded by a colonel. At the same session of the Assembly, a light infantry company was also incorporated. Soon after this a grenadier company was formed. This was chartered in October, and in December following, the Providence Fusileers, a company of horse, and another



er of artillery. In April following, the Fusileers and Artillery were united and formed into the United Train of Artillery, now in existence, a well organized and disciplined company. The Gazette of December 18, 1775, says "Not a day passes, Sundays excepted, but some of the companies are under arms; so well convinced are the people, that the complexion of the times renders a knowledge of the military art indispensably necessary." On the first Monday in April, a general muster of the militia of the colony took place, on which occasion, there were about two thousand men under arms in the county of Providence, besides the troop of horse. As early as January 1775, Stephen Jenckes, of North Providence, had supplied several of the independent companies in Providence with muskets, of his own manufacture. Other persons in the colony were extensively engaged in making small arms, at the same time.

News of the battle of Lexington reached Providence on the evening of the 19th of April. On the morning of the 21st, the several independent companies of this and the neighboring towns, and a body of the militia, in all about one thousand men, had either marched or were in readiness to march, to the assistance of their brethren in Massachusetts.—A special session of the General Assembly convened on the 22d, at which, and at the May session which soon followed, energetic steps were taken not only to put the colony in a posture of defence, but also to assist the other colonies in carrying on offensive measures against the British troops in Bos-



ton. Providence contributed her full share to these measures, and at the same time, exerted herself in adopting means for her own defence, in addition to those pursued by the colony. Several British vessels of war were in Newport harbor and cruising in the Bay. To prevent them from reaching Providence and laying it under contribution for supplies, was the principal object of their immediate care. By the latter part of July, they had thrown up a breastwork and entrenchment between Field and Sassafras Points, and had erected a battery of six-eigheten pounders on Fox Point. At a town meeting on the 29th day of August, Esek Hopkins, afterwards first commodore of the American Navy, was appointed commandant of this battery ; Samuel Warner, Lieutenant, and Christopher Sheldon, Gunner. Seven men were appointed for each gun. A floating battery was soon commenced. In October they prepared scows, filled with combustible materials, and were engaged in stretching a boom and chain across the channel, when the colony assumed the direction and completion of these works.

Pursuant to the recommendations of Congress, they erected a beacon on the east hill, near the junction of Meeting and Prospect streets, for the purpose of giving notice to the surrounding country, in case of an attack on the town. The beacon was fired on the night of the 17th of August, to enable persons at a distance to ascertain its location. Its light, it was said, was seen in Newport, New-London, Norwich, Pomfret, Prospect Hill in Cambridge, and in almost all the towns within the same distance



from it. They soon had an opportunity of ascertaining if they had any other defences, than the works which they had erected. On the morning of the 22d of August, the *Rose*, *Glasgow*, and *Swan*, British ships of war, with their tenders, were discovered opposite Conimicut Point, about ten miles distant. An alarm was given. The batteries were immediately manned, as were also the entrenchments. The military companies of the town and vicinity appeared under arms. The ships, however, did not approach any nearer, and on the evening of the same day, moved down the bay to their former station. The foregoing circumstances show, that they might have met with an over warm reception, had they made an attempt on this town.

In February 1776, a census of the arms, and men able to bear arms, in Providence, was taken by order of the town. The report states,

	men, arms, families, inhab.			
On the east side the river,	419	305	431	2678
On the west side the river,	307	192	310	1677
Total	<u>726</u>	<u>497</u>	<u>741</u>	<u>4355.</u>

After the British troops evacuated Boston, the American camp near there was broken up, and the regular army took up their line of march for New-York. General Washington arrived here on his way to that city, on the 5th of April. He was escorted into town by the Cadet and Light Infantry companies, and by two regiments of continental troops. The success which had crowned his exertions to expel the British troops from Boston, made him a welcome and honored guest.



In May of this year, the General Assembly of the colony repealed the act entitled "An act for the more effectual securing to his Majesty the allegiance of his subjects in this his colony and dominion of Rhode-Island and Providence Plantations."

The preamble of the repealing act is as follows :

"Whereas, in all states, existing by compact, protection and allegiance are reciprocal, the latter being only due in consequence of the former ; and whereas, George the third, king of Great Britain, forgetting his dignity, regardless of the compact most solemnly entered into, ratified and confirmed to the inhabitants of this colony, by his illustrious ancestors, and, till of late, fully recognized by him, and entirely departing from the duties and character of a good king, instead of protecting, is endeavoring to destroy the good people of this colony, and of all the united colonies, by sending fleets and armies to America, to confiscate our property, and spread fire, sword and desolation throughout our country, in order to compel us to submit to the most debasing and detestable tyranny ; whereby we are obliged by necessity, and it becomes our highest duty, to use every means, with which God and nature have furnished us, in support of our invaluable rights and privileges, and to oppose that power which is exerted only for our destruction :"

The act then goes on to repeal the act referred to in the title, requires the name and authority of the king to be omitted in all commissions and judicial process, and that of the governor and company of the colony, to be inserted in lieu thereof. New oaths of office were also prescribed by the same act, omitting allegiance to the king. This act, by its terms, severed the connexion between this colony and Great Britain. It is virtually a declaration of independence, and it is believed to be prior in date to any act, of similar character, passed by any other



colony. Under its charter, the colony enjoyed many privileges above the rest of New-England. The hand of oppression had not been heavily laid on its citizens ; yet the enjoyment of these privileges made them alive to every encroachment on the liberties of the subject, and prompt to oppose the first approach of arbitrary power. Congress made their famous declaration of independence in July following. The General Assembly met to consider the same, on the 18th of the same month. It received their sanction without any hesitation. The event was celebrated in Providence on the 25th. The governor, and such members of the Assembly as were in town, were escorted by the Cadet and Light Infantry Companies, to the court house, where the act of the Assembly, and the declaration of Congress, were publicly read. A salute of thirteen guns from the Artillery and the Continental ships in the harbor, followed. A public dinner was provided, and spirited and appropriate toasts given. In the evening the king's arms were taken down from the public offices and burnt. The keeper of the "Crown Coffee House," contributed his sign to the same fire. These proceedings evinced a determination to secure the independence which had been declared to exist. At this time the enemy's cruisers swarmed in the bay, and greatly interrupted the trade of Providence. Their numbers increased as the season advanced, and on the 8th of December, a large body of troops took possession of the island of Rhode-Island. Ships of war were there stationed, and in the harbor of Newport, and the passages each side of Rhode-Island



and Conanicut, were strictly guarded. The first appearance of the enemy's fleet caused an alarm to be spread, and the independent companies and militia promptly repaired to their stations. Large bodies of soldiers arrived at Providence and remained here for some time ; it being supposed that the British troops intended to march through Providence to Boston. This was never attempted nor probably thought of. The salubrity of the climate of that beautiful island, the easy access to and safety of its harbor, the facility with which it could be defended against any attack from the main land, rendered it, in every respect, an important post for the enemies of America. The British retained possession of the island until the 25th of October 1779. Their presence kept the whole colony in a continual state of alarm. Excursions were very frequently made by the tenders and small armed vessels to the neighboring islands, and to the main. To guard against these, it was necessary to maintain a chain of posts all around Narragansett Bay. Though aided by some continental troops, and by soldiers from the adjoining states, the inhabitants of this state were almost constantly engaged in keeping watch and ward. Providence, then next in size and importance to Newport, and at the head of navigable water, was supposed to be peculiarly in danger. The town exhibited the appearance of a camp. The college building was first used as quarters for the artillery, and the grounds around it for a parade, and afterwards for a hospital for the sick soldiery. The ordinary business of the town was suspended. Many



of the inhabitants removed to places of safety in the interior, and there was nothing but the din of arms, and the thrilling sounds of martial music, to break the silence that reigned in the streets. Comfortless as the inhabitants were, they could still afford a refuge to their friends from Newport, who were driven from their homes by British troops there, and they did so, thus discharging the debt their ancestors incurred, for like kindness received in the Indian war of 1676. News of the treaty with France arrived in Providence on the 22d day of April 1778. It was received with every mark of joy. A salute was fired on the arrival of the news, from the battery on Fox Point, and from the frigate Providence, which was repeated at sunset by a *feu de joie* from the Artillery Company, and troops here.

Two expeditions against the British troops on Rhode-Island, were planned while they had possession of the Island. One on the 16th of October 1777, when Major General Spencer had the command in this department, and the other on the 9th of August, the following year, under General Sullivan. The first was not carried into execution at all. All necessary provision of military stores, ammunition, and boats, was made. A sufficient body of troops assembled, yet owing to some neglect in the arrangement of the boats and troops, it was abandoned. After the arrival of the French fleet under Count D'Estaing, in the latter part of July 1778, great hopes were excited, that with his co-operation the enemy might be expelled from the Island.

Major General Sullivan left Providence on the



7th day of August, to assume the immediate command of the forces assembled and assembling at Tiverton, for that purpose. The council of war of the state ordered out half of the whole military strength of the state, to do duty for twenty days. Two regiments of the Continental army passed through Providence on the 3d of August. Volunteers and levies from the adjoining states were flocking to the camp, and every thing seemed to promise success to the expedition. The American forces, soon after the arrival of General Sullivan at the camp, crossed over to the island, and advanced toward Newport, where the enemy lay. The French fleet had an encounter with the British, under Lord Howe, off Point Judith, and did not return to the assistance of the army until the 20th of August. A storm, seldom equalled in severity at that season of the year, separated the fleets before either obtained any decisive advantage. On the 18th of August, General Sullivan opened his batteries on the enemy, and the firing was kept up, on both sides, during the two following days. On the 22d, the French fleet sailed for Boston, to convoy two of their ships, which had been disabled in the previous encounter. Deprived of their support, and daily fearing the arrival of the enemy's fleet with reinforcements, General Sullivan commenced a retreat on the night of the 23th. On the 29th he was attacked, and after a severe action evacuated the island. General Lafayette, in his last visit to America, spoke of this battle as the best fought one in the whole war. He was present a part of it, having rode from Boston,



where he went to induce Count D'Estaing to return, if possible, to Rhode-Island, with the fleet. After the evacuation of the island, the troops again separated. No critical examination was ever had as to the causes of the failure of this expedition. If the French fleet had rendered the assistance expected from them, the whole of the British forces on the island must have been taken prisoners.

While the British had possession of Rhode-Island, the *Pigot*, galley, was stationed at the entrance of Seconet river, on the east of the Island. She carried eight twelve-pounders, and had forty-five men. It was deemed a matter of some considerable importance to remove this obstruction to the navigation of that river, and thus open a free passage to vessels from Providence and Mount Hope bay to the sea. The destruction of this galley was entrusted to, if not originally planned by Major Silas Talbut, of Providence. He left Providence on the 25th of October, in the sloop *Hawk*; with two Lieutenants and fifty men, volunteers from the army, under Gen. Sullivan. They passed the British battery on Rhode-Island, opposite Fogland Point, in the night of the 28th, and about one o'clock on the morning of the 29th, boarded the *Pigot*, and carried her, without the loss of a man. The Lieutenant who commanded the *Pigot*, expressed much chagrin that he should be taken by an "egg-shell," as he termed the *Hawk*, although commanded by a "Major." The prize was carried into New-London, and subsequently sent to Providence. Major Talbut received the thanks of the General Assembly of this State, and a sword,



for this daring enterprise, and Congress promoted him to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. America had not a more active friend than Colonel Talbut. Alternately, in the army and navy as his country called for his services, through the whole war, he devoted himself to her cause.

General Sullivan left the command here, in March 1779, and was succeeded by Major General Gates. Such had been the devoted attention of Gen. Sullivan to his duties, his zeal for the cause of his country, his vigorous exertions against the enemy, and his scrupulous regard for the rights of the citizen, while stationed here, that all classes of people united in addresses to him, at the time he left the command. The following address was presented him by the town of Providence.

“SIR,—As you have sustained the high office of commander-in-chief at this post for about a year past, and during that whole time have carefully attended to, and cordially promoted the peace, interest and safety of the state in general, and of this town in particular, all that prudence could suggest, that diligence could effect or valor attempt, has been done for us. But as the service of America is now to deprive us of your further continuance here, and calls you to fill the same high office, in more important commands, we can do no less than honestly to return you our sincere thanks and most grateful acknowledgements, wishing you the blessings of Heaven, success in all your efforts to serve your country, that you may happily tread the courts of virtue, and finally reach the temple of fame.

We are, Sir, with every sentiment of gratitude and the highest respect, Your Honor's most obedient humble servants.

Signed by the unanimous order and in behalf of a town meeting of the freemen of the town of Providence, assembled on the 19th day of March 1779.

THEODORE FOSTER, Town clerk.”



General Sullivan returned the following answer.

"To the respectable freemen and inhabitants of the town of Providence.—Permit me, Gentlemen, to return you my most sincere and cordial acknowledgments, for your very polite and affectionate address. The unanimous voice of so respectable a number of my fellow-citizens, approving my conduct as Commander-in-chief of this department, affords me unspeakable satisfaction; and it is with great truth and sincerity I assure you, that the parting with so spirited and virtuous a people, whose efforts to support me in my commands and to oppose the common enemy have so well witnessed their zeal for the interests of America, gives me the most sensible pain; and, in a great degree, damps the pleasure arising from a prospect of rendering my country essential services, in the department to which I am called.

I have the honor to be, with the most lively sentiments of esteem and gratitude, Gentlemen, your obedient servant.

JOHN SULLIVAN."

Major General Gates arrived in Providence on the third of April. Little opportunity had General Gates in this department, to add to the laurels he had previously acquired. The troops of the enemy exceeded in number those under his command; and their station, in the midst of the state, aided by a naval force that enabled them to carry on a predatory warfare, in any part of it, at pleasure, made his situation no sinecure. After the enemy evacuated the island, new duties of a perplexing character engaged his attention. Then came the conflicting claims to property left by them, which in many instances had been taken from the inhabitants of the neighboring shores and was now reclaimed by the former owners. His services were esteemed too valuable by the Commander-in-Chief, to be devoted to such objects. On the eighth of November he left Providence, on his way to the grand army.



On the expected arrival of a French fleet and army in this colony, Major General Heath was invested with the command in this department. He arrived in Providence, on the 16th of June 1780. The French armament under the command of Count De Rochambeau and Chevalier De Ternay, entered Newport harbor on the 9th of July. They were not suffered to remain long at rest. A British fleet under Admiral Graves soon appeared off Rhode-Island. This and a report of an intended attack on the French, induced the Governor of this state to call out the whole body of militia of the state, to assist in repelling it. Massachusetts and Connecticut also despatched a large body of troops to their assistance. The alarm continued but a few days. On the 7th of August the Rhode-Island militia were dismissed, the enemy having returned to New-York. The French army remained in Newport during the winter. Early in the spring, General Washington visited them there, for the purpose of maturing the plan of the next campaign. On his return through this town, he was met at the lower ferry and escorted to the house of the Hon. Jabez Bowen, by the citizens. A salute from the Artillery welcomed his arrival. In the evening the town was brilliantly illuminated. The following day he dined at the state-house, and in the evening attended a ball given on the occasion. The following address indicates the esteem, and almost veneration, felt for General Washington, and the universal joy inspired by his presence.



“To his excellency General George Washington, Commander-in-chief of the armies of the United States.

The subscribers, in behalf of the inhabitants of the town of Providence, beg leave to address your excellency, upon your arrival in this place.

Your excellency's great military abilities, your unquestionable patriotism, and the perfect confidence of a free people, just entering into a war with a most formidable foe, induced Congress to place you at the head of the American armies. The appointment gave us the most sincere pleasure, and we gratefully acknowledge that kind Providence, which in the most arduous enterprises, and through all the dangers of your situation, hath preserved a life so important to the United States.

We beg leave to assure your excellency, that we will manifest our attachment to your excellency, and the great cause in which we are engaged, by exerting the utmost of our abilities in enlisting and supporting such a force, as with the aid of our generous allies, will be sufficient to bring the war to a happy issue.

That your excellency may be the glorious instrument of effecting this most desirable event, which will deliver your name to posterity with a fame equal to that of the most celebrated heroes of antiquity; and that you may long enjoy the honors that will be paid you, by a grateful country, is the sincere prayer of,

Your excellency's most obedient and most humble servants.

Nicholas Cooke,	Jonathan Arnold,
Jabez Bowen,	Nicholas Brown,
John I. Clark,	John Brown.

His reply was as follows :

“To the Honorable Nicholas Cooke, Esq. and the other inhabitants of the Town of Providence.

I am happy in the opportunity which your address affords me, of testifying to you how deeply I am penetrated with those demonstrations of attachment, which I have experienced from the inhabitants of this town. The confidence and affections of his fellow-citizens, is the most valuable reward a citizen can receive. Next to the happiness of my country, this is the most powerful inducement I can have to exert myself in its service. Conscious of a sincere design to promote that great object, how-



ever short of my wishes the success of my endeavors may fall, I console myself with a persuasion, that the goodness of my intentions, in some measure, justifies your approbation.

The determination you are pleased to express of making every effort for giving vigor to our military operations, is consonant with the spirit that has uniformly actuated this state. It is by this disposition alone, we can hope, under the protection of Heaven, to secure the important blessings for which we contend.

With sincere gratitude for your sentiments and wishes towards me, I beg you to accept the assurances of that perfect esteem and regard, with which I have the honor to be,

Gentlemen, your most obedient and most humble servant,

GEO. WASHINGTON."

Soon after this, the French camp at Newport was broken up, and the troops marched through Providence, and joined the army under General Washington. A part of them encamped for a very short time on the west side of the river, on the plain near the burial ground of the Benevolent Congregational Society. The second division of this army spent the winter of 1782, in North-Providence. The remains of their encampment are now to be seen, on the rising ground to the east of the Pawtucket turnpike, extending from Harrington's Lane, almost as far north as the Turnpike gate.

Occasional alarms disturbed the peace of this state during this and the succeeding year, especially after the predatory excursions of the traitor Arnold, into his native state of Connecticut. Soon after the surrender of Cornwallis, hopes of an immediate peace, were wafted with every breeze across the Atlantic. Tired of a contest which she had pursued for years with no prospect of success, her internal peace threatened by her own citizens, and her external relations with



the kingdoms of Europe, daily assuming a more sombre aspect, Great Britain entered into negotiations which resulted in restoring peace to Europe, and independence to the United States of America. The preliminary articles were signed at Versailles, in January 1783, and a proclamation declaring a cessation of arms was issued by Congress, on the 11th day of April following. The celebration of this joyful event in Providence, took place on the 22d day of April. The morning was welcomed by a discharge of cannon and the ringing of bells. The Continental frigate Alliance, then in the harbor, and the rest of the shipping were decked with colors, and fired salutes in honor of the occasion. A civic procession, escorted by the Artillery, marched from the house of Deputy Governor Bowen, to the Baptist meeting-house. The Rev. Enos Hitchcock, pastor of the First Congregational Society, preached a sermon on the occasion, from Psalm cxv. 1. "Not unto us, O Lord, but unto Thy name, give glory." This was followed by an oration by the Hon. Asher Robbins, now of Newport, then a tutor in the college here. After the services at the meeting-house, the procession moved to the Court house, where the proclamation of Congress for a cessation of arms was read from the balcony, and followed by a discharge of thirteen cannon from the state house parade, and a battery on the east hill near the beacon. The proclamation was also read in two other places, after which the procession returned to the state house, where an entertainment had been provided. After dinner, thirteen toasts, more patriotic than loyal,



were drank, each under a discharge of thirteen cannon.

In the evening, the state house and market house were illuminated, and a display of fireworks closed the festivities of the day. The Artillery Company on this occasion paraded under Col. Daniel Tillinghast. During the whole war, he was the commander of this corps. Under him, they were always ready to meet the calls of their country. The old colors, now preserved by them with care, bear witness to the hard usage which they experienced, and the dangers to which the band exposed them.

At the commencement of the troubles with the mother country, which led to the independence of the United States, the colony of Rhode-Island was deeply engaged in commerce. While the small extent of the colony and the comparative unproductiveness of its soil, impelled the inhabitants to other than agricultural pursuits, the long line of sea coast, and above all, the Narragansett Bay, running up in its very centre, induced them to turn their attention to commerce. From a representation made to the British government, it appears, that during the year ending December 31, 1763, 181 vessels from Europe, Africa, and the West Indies, and 352 from the neighboring colonies, cleared at the custom house in Newport, then the only one in the colony. These employed more than 2,200 seamen. To a colony thus situated, all acts of the British Parliament intended to restrict colonial trade, were peculiarly oppressive. Hence in such a colony, might naturally be expected the first open opposition to such acts ;



and here it was found, in the case of the *Gaspee*, the circumstances of which have been related ; and also in the case of the armed sloop *Liberty*, which was burnt in the harbor of Newport, in 1769.

The General Assembly, in June 1775, directed the committee of safety to charter two vessels to protect the trade of the colony, one of ten guns and eighty men, and the other of less force. Abraham Whipple was invested with the command of both, with the title of Commodore. The smaller vessel was commanded by John Grimes. The name of the larger one was "*Katy*," that of the other is not known. In August they added to this naval armament, two row galleys, carrying sixty men.—The design of this measure, is equivocally expressed by the General Assembly, "to protect the trade of the colony." Commodore Whipple explains this phrase in a memorial which he subsequently addressed to Congress. He stated that he received his appointment on the 15th day of June ; that it was made his duty to clear the bay of the tenders belonging to the British frigate *Rose*, then off Newport ; and that on the very day of his appointment he discharged this duty by making prize of one of these tenders, after discharging at her the first cannon fired at any part of his Majesty's navy, in the revolutionary war.

On the 26th day of August 1775, the General Assembly instructed the delegates of the colony in Congress, "to use their whole influence, at the ensuing Congress, for building, at the continental expense, a fleet of sufficient force for the protection of



these colonies; and for employing them in such manner and places, as will most annoy our enemies and contribute to the common defence of these colonies." This, it is believed, was the earliest movement in favor of establishing a continental navy. Congress met on the 5th day of September, and these instructions were laid before them on the third day of October following. The proposition met with a favorable reception, and measures were soon taken to carry them into effect. A committee of that body, was instructed to procure three vessels, one of fourteen, one of twenty, and one of thirty-six guns, for the protection and defence of the united colonies. Esek Hopkins of North Providence, then a brigadier-general in the service of this State, received the appointment of commander-in-chief of this infant navy. He was desired by the marine committee of Congress to repair to Philadelphia, with as many officers and men as he could enlist in the service. The council of war of the State, dispatched the *Katy* under the command of Commodore Whipple to Philadelphia, having Commodore Hopkins with his men on board as passengers, with orders for her to remain in the service of Congress, in case the armed vessels were directed to cruise off New-England, and if not, then to return home.—She was retained in the service and her name changed to the "*Providence*." The proposed naval armament was increased, and Commodore Whipple was appointed to the command of the ship *Columbus*. This fleet, under Commodore Hopkins, left the capes of the Delaware on the 17th day of February,



1776. It consisted of the ships Alfred, Captain Dudley Saltonstall, and the Columbus, Captain Whipple, the brigs Andrew Doria, Captain Nicholas Biddle, and the Cabot, Captain John B. Hopkins, and the sloops Providence, Fly, Hornet and Wasp.—Without paying very strict obedience to the public orders he received, Commodore Hopkins sailed to the Bermudas, and took from Nassau, all the cannon and military stores there, consisting, among other things, of 88 cannon, from 9 to 36 pounders, 15 mortars, from 4 to 11 inches diameter, 5458 shells, and more than 11,000 round shot. They returned to New-London on the 8th day of April, and subsequently came up to Providence. This was the first naval expedition against the British government, under Congress.

The committee appointed by Congress on the 14th day of December 1775, to build the thirteen vessels of war, agreed upon the day before, appointed Nicholas Cooke, Nicholas Brown, Joseph Russell, Joseph Brown, John Brown, John Smith, William Russell, Daniel Tillinghast, John Innes Clarke, Joseph Nightingale, Jabez Bowen and Rufus Hopkins, all of Providence, to build the two directed to be built in Rhode-Island. This committee held their first meeting on the 8th of January following. On the eleventh, they agreed upon the dimensions of the vessels to be built, which were as follows.

	The Warren.	The Providence.
Gun deck,	132 feet, 1 inch.	124 feet, 4 inches.
Keel,	110 feet, $10\frac{3}{4}$ inches.	102 feet, $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches.
Beam,	34 feet, $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches.	33 feet, $10\frac{3}{8}$ inches.
Hold,	11 feet.	10 feet, 8 inches.



Benjamin Tallman, was master-carpenter of the Warren, and Sylvester Bowers, of the Providence. The first was launched on the 14th, and the other on the 24th day of May, 1776. These vessels were not ready for sea until late in October. By the journal of the committee, it appears, that on the 21st of that month, they received a letter from the Marine Committee of Congress, blaming them for some of their proceedings; in consequence of which, and of reports which they say "bear hard on the characters of the committee, as merchants and as gentlemen," they relinquished their authority, and delivered the vessels to Stephen Hopkins, then one of this state's delegates in Congress. They close the journal of their proceedings, by saying, that, "in the opinion of the committee they are fit and might proceed immediately to sea, were they fully manned." Great difficulties and delays occurred in procuring men, for these vessels. The wages were fixed at eight dollars per month, and to share one third of all prizes, except armed vessels, and of them, one half. Privateers were then numerous and very successful. They offered a share of one half of all prizes taken, and monthly wages, of from twelve to sixteen dollars. Collisions frequently arose, between the officers of the Continental ships, and the captains and owners of privateers, about men claimed, on either side, as deserters. From these causes, Commodore Hopkins did not hoist his flag on board the Warren, until about the first of December. At the mouth of Narragansett Bay, he met a British fleet of sixteen ships of the line, that compelled him to return to



Providence. The Continental vessels then at Providence, were the Warren, Providence, Columbus, Hampden, and sloop Providence. In a letter to the marine committee, he states, that the vessels were not then half manned. The collisions before spoken of, led to mutual criminations, to the marine committee. He charged the building committee, with withdrawing the men at work on the frigates, to labor on their own privateers. It was to reports of this kind, that they probably alluded, in their journal. Commodore Hopkins was directed, in June 1776, to meet the marine committee at Philadelphia. What were the charges against him does not appear, but whatever they were, he was acquitted of them and retained his command. On his leaving Philadelphia, the committee gave him further general orders, in relation to the future operations of the fleet, on the Banks of Newfoundland and the Gulf of St. Lawrence. In another communication to him about the same date, they direct him to purchase a schooner he had taken, and add, "this schooner must be called the Hopkins." Such a compliment is seldom paid to an inefficient or unfaithful officer. In a letter from the famous John Paul Jones to him, under date of September 4th, from the sloop Providence, then at sea, under his command, he says, "I know you will not suspect me of flattery, when I affirm I have not experienced a more sincere pleasure, for a long time past, than the account I have have had of your having gained your cause at Philadelphia, in spite of party. Your late trouble will tend to your future advantage; by pointing out your friends and ene-



mies, you will be thereby enabled to retain the one part, while you are guarding against the others. You will be thrice welcome to your native land and to your nearest concerns. After your late shock, they will see you as gold from the fire, of more worth and value, and slander will learn to keep silence, when Admiral Hopkins is mentioned." He was frequently addressed as Admiral, but his title was merely Commander in chief.

The following year, repeated complaints were made to Congress against him, for which he was at first censured, and subsequently dismissed the service. I have not been able to ascertain what the complaints were, but they did not affect his character as a brave man, and a patriot.

After the American fleet arrived in Providence, from their first expedition, they never left together. The difficulty of manning them has been before alluded to, and for a great part of the time a superior British force was at the mouth of the bay. Occasionally a single vessel, would avail itself of a fog, or a dark night, and escape. This was the case with the sloop Providence, under Captain Jones, and the ship Columbus, Captain Whipple. After the ship Providence was completed, Captain Whipple was transferred to her. In the memorial of Captain Whipple before referred to, he states that he sailed from Providence on the 20th day of March 1778, in the ship Providence, and had a battle with one of the enemy's cruisers in getting out.

During the war, Providence abounded in privateers. They were generally successful in eluding



the British cruisers which swarmed on our coasts, and in making prizes of merchantmen, transports and small vessels of war. Many of the resources of the American army and navy, were obtained by means of these, and most of the foreign merchandize, in the country, was introduced here, through their agency. By touching the pockets of British merchants, they did much toward influencing the British government to acknowledge the independence of these states, and to conclude peace with them. Privateering was almost the only business in which American merchants could employ their vessels. Patriotism and private interest concurred in urging them to pursue it vigorously. Good men of those days never hesitated to engage in it, on account of any supposed moral wrong which it involved. Such an objection is of modern date. I would not be understood as justifying privateering. I only desire to restore it to its proper rank. The same code which says, thou shalt not steal, says also, thou shalt not kill.

In January 1777, a convention of deputies from the New-England States met in Providence, to state the prices of goods and labor. The colonies had reaped great advantages from the association, as it was called, of the Congress of 1774. The committees of inspection, appointed in pursuance of it, by a diligent and faithful discharge of their trusts, had restrained individuals from demanding exorbitant prices, either for their labor or goods. The declaration of Independence, and the subsequent act of Congress opening the ports of the states, virtually



repealed the association. After an open resort to arms, it was unnecessary to regulate or restrain trade with Great Britain, for the very situation of the parties forbade the friendly interchanges of commerce. Congress and the states too, had thus far carried on the war by issuing bills of credit. The issues of these were regulated by the wants of the army and navy. They constituted the currency of the country. Every successive issue of them, tended to depreciate their value, as it necessarily increased the amount, and consequently rendered the day of payment more distant and less certain. This depreciation of the currency produced an apparent increase in the prices of all the necessities of life, and this convention was called to regulate these prices. They met, and after some deliberation, agreed upon certain prices to be paid and received, for labor and almost every necessary article. The General Assembly of this state being in session, at the same time, the convention reported to them. They immediately passed an act with the following popular title. "An act to prevent monopolies and oppression, by excessive and unreasonable prices, for many of the necessities and conveniences of life, and for preventing engrossers, and for the better supply of our troops in the army, with such necessities as may be wanted." This act embodied and adopted the report of the convention, and added other articles to it, so that it included almost every article, called necessary or convenient, from a bushel of wheat, down to a quart of milk. He who bought or sold for a higher rate, was to "be accounted oppressive,



an enemy to his country, and guilty of a breach of this act," and to be subject to a fine. The General Assembly were not unanimously in favor of this act. There were some who saw how futile must be every attempt to fix the prices of articles, when the currency in which they were to be paid for was constantly depreciating in value, or in fact had no fixed value. The town of Providence, in June following, appointed David Howell, Welcome Arnold, and Theodore Foster, to draft instructions to the town's representatives, in relation to it. The following was their report, which was adopted by the town.

"To Messrs. Jonathan Arnold, John Brown, John Smith, and William Rhodes, representatives for the town of Providence.

Gentlemen.—Having chosen you our representatives in the General Assembly of this state, and not doubting but it must be agreeable to you, especially at this critical time, to be acquainted with the sentiments of your constituents, respecting sundry matters of weighty concernment to this and the neighboring states, we have thought fit to give you the following instructions.

You are directed to move for, and exert your influence in the General Assembly, to obtain an act for the more effectual and certain supply of the troops raised by this State, and their families, with such necessaries of life as they may want, at such rates as may comport with the wages allowed them by government; because by the late acts of this state regulating prices, such articles are generally set higher than they were at the time of their enlistment, by which means, if said act should be carried into execution and no other provision be made in their behalf, they would be deprived of part of their dues; and if not executed, most probably of a much greater part: and, because, under the present embarrassments of trade, it is extremely difficult for them to procure some articles, with their money, at any rate.

The following may be the outlines of the bill proposed. A



sufficient number of commissaries or committees may be appointed, in the most convenient towns in this state, who may buy or import such needful articles, on the best terms they can, for the use and on account of the state. Let these commissaries deal out as directed, and at such prices as may be affixed, by the Assembly, and keeping fair accounts of all their proceedings, exhibit them when required, and be paid for their trouble; and let the state sink all the expense and loss upon the sale of such articles by a general tax upon the inhabitants.

By this means, the burden which now falls heavily on some individuals, by whose industry and zeal in the common cause the public are supplied with articles much wanted, will fall equally upon all the interest in the state. A plan somewhat similar to this, was adopted last war.

As soon as adequate provision shall be made for supplying our troops, in the abovesaid, or any other equitable mode, you are instructed and directed to move for and exert your best endeavors to obtain, an immediate and total repeal of the late act of this state regulating prices, &c.

Because the great end of that law will then be otherwise answered and the only plausible reason of it removed; and,

Because, we find by experience, that the subject of said act, is so intricate, variable and complicated, that it cannot be and remain any term of time equitable, and hath a tendency to frustrate and defeat its own purposes. It was made to cheapen the articles of life, but it has in fact raised their prices, by producing an artificial, and in some articles a real, scarcity. It was made to unite us in good agreement respecting prices, but hath produced animosity and ill will between town and country and between buyers and sellers, in general. It was made to bring us to some equitable standard of honesty, and make fair dealers; but hath produced a sharpening set of mushroom pedlers, who adulterate their commodities, and take every advantage to evade the force of the act, by the most pitiful evasions, quibbles and lies. It was made to give credit to our currency; but hath done it much injury; it tends to introduce bartering, and makes a currency of almost every thing, but money; and,

Because, by experience, we, as well as the inhabitants of the other states, find it almost impossible to execute such acts, at



least without a degree of rigor and severity heretofore unknown in these free states; and, while it remains in its present situation, it tends only to weaken government, and bring all laws into contempt, and even if it could be executed, it would operate as a very heavy and unreasonable tax upon the sellers, who are generally the enterprising and the industrious: It would prevent foreigners from shipping goods to our coasts, and cause our own merchants to order theirs to the southern states, and, in general, discourage foreign trade, in carrying on which, the risk is great and very uncertain and variable, according to circumstances, from time to time, and therefore, not accurately computable three years before hand. It would also tend to discourage agriculture and manufactures among ourselves, as the prospect of some extraordinary gain generally excites men to extraordinary exertions in all the different branches of business. It hath a tendency to exclude from our markets every thing extraordinary in its kind, and of course, to prevent all improvement; to discourage industrious laborers, by allowing the indolent the same wages; for the scarcity of laborers will find employment for all, as the scarcity of goods will bring nearly all qualities up to the prices of the first rate, by which means, articles of inferior quality will be sold dearer to the poor, than what they would be afforded at if those of the first rate quality should be sold higher. It would multiply oaths and lawsuits, otherwise needless, and prove a strong temptation to perjury and knavery of every kind, and in some cases put a man to needless expense in the disposal of his own property. It would render a man's house and stores liable to be opened and searched in a manner most ignominious and unworthy of a freeman, and deprive him of the privilege of complaining of it, under the penalty of ten pounds. It would promote suspicion and jealousies in neighborhoods, and a meddling with other folks' goods and business, ruinous to the peace and good order of society. If regulating acts should succeed one another, in time, as the last has the first, in this state, and some articles be raised accordingly in each succeeding act, they would rise faster than they did before any such acts were made, and at the end of three years, be higher than it is probable they would be were no such acts in being. The fact above referred



to, may convince all, that the rise of prices in general, is not so much owing to a spirit of monopoly and oppression, as to the scarcity of goods and plenty of money ; as our harbor has been blocked up, and the goods formerly on hand chiefly turned into money. The act stipulating prices, &c. is an attempt to make an article, viz. money, worth as much when plenty, as when it was more scarce, and to continue it of an uniform value, for a term of time, notwithstanding the entire uncertainty of the quantity that may be thrown into circulation by future emissions, or gathered in by taxation or otherwise, and therefore cannot, without injustice, take place. Time was, when a pair of shoes in England, was commonly sold for four pence, and an ox for fourteen shillings ; but the price of those articles has, since, been greatly enhanced, owing to the great plenty of gold and silver introduced, which has depreciated the value of the coin. It is not therefore strange, that a similar event should take place, with respect to a paper currency, and that no law should be able to prevent it. The money in a country, is only the measure of the value of its transferable property. The decrease of property, or increase of money, will raise the price of commodities, and both operating at once, will produce a more sudden and sensible effect. This has been our case, and if the whole money only measure the whole property, a proportionable part of the money ought to measure the same proportionable part of the property, and neither more or less, for either would be injustice. Therefore, stipulating prices below this proportion, is as real injustice, as raising them above it, and this proportion is so nice a point, that nothing but the wants of mankind, can accurately hit upon it. Trade, when left free from fetters and embarrassments, will of itself settle down nicely to this proportion, and keep to it closer, than any force whatever can bring it. If the prices of commodities are arbitrarily fixed below this proportion, the redundancy of money will fix itself upon such articles as are not limited, and raise them as much above it, as the others are stated below ; for the money will not satisfy, unless it circulates,—the whole of it,—till it is thrown into some form of drawing interest.

You are also directed to move that immediate application be



made to Congress, that all the states' money might be redeemed with continental currency, and each state charged by the continent with what they receive. Should this be accomplished, and the money be redeemed by loan office certificates, it would take large sums out of circulation, and so raise the value of the remainder. Some such modes, together with heavy taxes, a free trade and domestic industry, would bid much fairer for lowering the articles of life, than any regulating acts that can be adopted.

You are likewise directed, to move in the General Assembly, that the other New-England states be addressed upon the subject of their late embargoes, and endeavor to obtain a general repeal of all their land embargoes as soon as may be, and that ours be repealed immediately; because, all embargoes, in measure, produce the same bad effects in trade, as the regulating acts, and ought never to be adopted, except in cases of the greatest necessity; and because no such necessity will remain after the acts regulating prices are repealed."

The representatives of Providence moved the repeal of the act. But neither their instructions, their arguments, or their influence, could prevail in carrying the measure. They were left in a lean minority of seven, only three of the other representatives voting with them.

In 1777, commenced a difficulty and dispute between the state and the town of Providence, in relation to the town's proportion of state taxes. In 1767, an estimate of all the polls and rateable estate was taken, by order of the General Assembly. This estimate continued to be the basis of the apportionment of colony and state taxes, until March 1777. Supposing that the rate adopted in 1767 was not then correct, the Assembly departed from it in the apportionment of a tax of £16,000, then ordered, and a larger proportion than the estimate warranted was ordered to be paid by Providence. The representatives



protested against this increase of taxes, except upon a new estimate of the state. The difficulty was removed for the present, by the Assembly annexing to the tax-bill, a provision, that that apportionment should not be drawn in precedent, in future assessments. In August following, the treasury being empty, another tax of £32,000 was ordered. The estimate of 1767, had undoubtedly become unequal at that time, and the situation of affairs would not allow a delay till a new one could be taken, nor was the situation of the state such as would render it easy to obtain a fair one. This was directed to be apportioned in the same manner as the tax of March preceding. The town, thereupon, appointed a committee to draw up a petition to the Assembly upon the subject. John Updike, John Brown, William Wheaton, Lewis Peck and David Howell were appointed this committee. The petition drawn up by them, represented, that since the preceding February, the number of polls had diminished 130, that real estate had sunk at least twenty-five per cent. in value, that it cost the inhabitants on an average three shillings per week more than their earnings, since the blockade; and that this, added to the personal property removed from the town, ought to have reduced the town's proportion of the £32,000 tax. This picture of poverty did not move the hearts, or rather the votes, of the General Assembly. In December, they ordered another tax of £48,000, to be apportioned in the same manner. This seems to have raised a spirit of opposition. January 23d 1778, the town directed the collector of the £32,000 tax, to pay one ninth of



the sum collected into the town treasury, and to pay over to the general treasurer, such part only of the £48,000 tax as would have been the proportion of the town, according to the estimate of 1767. On the thirtieth of the same month, another petition was presented. The committee of the town appointed to draw it up, consisted of John Brown, William Rhodes and David Howell. The petition is in the hand writing of the latter, and is as follows :

“To the Honorable the General Assembly of the State of Rhode-Island and Providence Plantations.

The address, petition and remonstrance of the freeholders and other inhabitants of the town of Providence, in town meeting legally assembled on the 30th day of January 1778, humbly sheweth,

That, whereas, the Honorable Assembly of this government at their session in June 1767, passed an act “for taking a just estimate of the rateable estates in this colony, in order that the rates and taxes may be equally assessed on the inhabitants,” which containeth among other things the following clause: “And be it further enacted, that no colony tax shall be levied on the inhabitants of this colony, until the said estimate or valuation shall be completed and approved by the General Assembly; and that the said estimate when completed, shall be the standard and rule, by which rates and taxes shall be apportioned unto and upon the several towns in this colony, until a new estimate shall be taken;” which said estimate or valuation was accordingly taken, with great labor, diligence and accuracy, as well as at no small expense to the government, by the worthy gentlemen, the committee appointed for that purpose, and being laid before the General Assembly, finally received their approbation and sanction, and became and continued “the standard and rule for apportioning rates and taxes upon the several towns,” for more than nine years; and so, of right and justice, your petitioners, with beseeeming deference, apprehend ought still to continue, be and remain, according to the express letter thereof, “until another new estimate,” can in like manner be taken.



Your petitioners would beg leave to observe, that in their opinion and judgment the abovesaid act and order of Assembly, the only just and equitable mode of apportioning the rates and taxes to the several towns, being in its own nature preferable to all others and being founded in example, custom and usage, in this and all other free governments, time immemorial, became so essential a part of the laws and constitution of this state, that it ought not, neither could legally and constitutionally, be set aside and annihilated, by the conjectural estimate made, and adopted, as it was by the General Assembly, in March 1777, wherein the proportion of taxes upon the several towns is so widely different from the former, and manifestly unequal.—Legislative bodies, as well as individual persons, are subject to errors and mistakes, as well as prepossessions and prejudices. The objects, therefore, of that power, are no less defined and circumscribed, by the laws and constitution of their country, the rules of justice, common reason and humanity, than those of a judicial court or even an individual subject in the state.—Taxation being the most delicate and critical object before legislators, their conduct respecting the same ought always to be such as will bear the most strict and scrupulous examination of their constituents. Small deviations from the constitution, drawn into precedent, may in time, terminate in fatal innovations. It is an old maxim, that mankind are not to be trusted where they are interested against you; and it is equally true that they are not, to act in matters whereof they are ignorant; and it is no less evident, that it is the interest of a majority in the house to assign an undue proportion of a tax to any particular town, than it is, that they cannot know accurately what proportion to assign, without having before them an exact list of all the rateable estates, in all the towns. Such list or estimate therefrom, taken by good and sufficient men, is essentially necessary to perfect legal taxation. And no other way of apportioning a tax can be binding, excepting it be adopted by all the inhabitants at large, and approved of by every particular town. No General Assembly, therefore, in the humble opinion and judgment of your petitioners, have or ought to have, any legal power, of themselves, so far to alter the constitution and invade the privileges of their con-



stituents, as to take away their money at random, by lot, guess or conjectural estimates; neither can it be expected, that freemen will easily part with their money upon so uncertain and precarious a footing. It savors too much of those capricious and arbitrary measures of raising money from their subjects, adopted by absolute monarchs.

The town of Providence, through a singular zeal for introducing taxation, though sensible they were overrated, submitted to pay the proportion assigned them in the conjectural estimate of March 1777, in the £16,000 tax, confiding in the faith and honor of the General Assembly, expressed in the following clause of the act. "It is further resolved, that the proportion of the tax, in the act now laid upon each town, shall not be drawn in precedent or be considered as a rule for apportioning any future tax, but shall be reconsidered &c. as soon as a proper estimate can be made to ascertain the same," notwithstanding which resolve, a tax of £32,000 was ordered the next August and another tax of £48,000 the next December, to be apportioned, levied and collected in the same manner, by the same uncertain conjectural estimate, and notwithstanding our earnest entreaties and supplications to the contrary. Thus, that which was designed and intended, as only the creature of a day, is inflexibly adhered to and perpetuated, as though it had been the utmost effort of the united wisdom of the state, and established, like the laws of the Medes and Persians, irrevocable.

When a tax is to be assessed upon the inhabitants of a particular town, the law and constitution require, that the inhabitants render in to the assessors an exact list of all their rateable estates, that it may be levied upon them, according to equity and justice; much more forcibly and strongly do the same reasons operate, where a tax is to be apportioned to the several towns by the General Assembly, the supreme assessors in the state; and as it would be inequity and injustice in the assessors of a particular town, to refuse an inhabitant the benefit and privilege of exhibiting a list of his rateable effects, so, your petitioners humbly apprehend, it can be no less in the General Assembly to refuse them the benefit and privilege of the only legal and constitutional estimate, taken in the year 1767, until another can be taken in like



manner as that was. Were it needful to urge more argument in support of the above principles, of apportioning taxes only by just and legal estimates, your petitioners would produce the example and authority of the honorable the Continental Congress, in their order for apportioning the continental expenses to the several states. The following is extracted from the eighth article of Confederation and Perpetual Union. "All the charges of war and all other expenses that shall be incurred for the common defence or general welfare and allowed by the United States in Congress assembled, shall be defrayed out of a common treasury, which shall be supplied by the several states, in proportion to the value of all land within each state, granted to, or surveyed for any person, as such land and the buildings and improvements thereon, shall be estimated according to such mode as the United States in Congress assembled, shall from time to time direct and appoint." Thus the several states are to bear their true and just proportion of the continental expenses, according to an accurate continental estimate, and not to be saddled with burdens, hap-hazard and conjecturally; and in the present continental tax, the several states are only to be credited with what they pay until such estimate be taken. Here is the united wisdom of all America, an ordinance truly worthy of so august an assembly.

What has been said being sufficient to show, that the method of apportioning the three last taxes upon the several towns in this state was improper and illegal, your petitioners would beg your farther patience and indulgence, while they observe and endeavor to make appear, that it has operated greatly to their disadvantage in particular.

In the year 1767, when the last legal estimate was taken, the town of Providence was in its most flourishing circumstances. Its trade was open to almost all parts of the world, its navigation extensive and prosperous, its stores and warehouses crowded with all sorts of merchandize, its streets thronged with foreigners who came hither to advance their fortunes by trade and commerce. Shipwrights, housewrights, masons and all sorts of mechanics and laboring men, pressed with useful and profitable business and employment, and its extensive foreign trade, which



is the very being and life of a seaport, furnished business and support for all its numerous dependents, and invigorated every class of people in town. But how amazingly is the scene now reversed. Our port has been blockaded for more than twelve months, our stores and shops are almost empty, our navigation demolished, our ship building at an end, our houses already built, many of them standing empty and going to decay by slow degrees, or more suddenly and wantonly ruined and destroyed by barracking troops in them, many foreigners resident among us as well as others our most wealthy inhabitants, who made the principal figure in our trade, have packed up their fortunes and removed to places of greater security. The common sort of people who are left behind are mostly out of employment, and the poor are yet among us to be supported by the remaining persons of property. This is but a brief and imperfect, though real and true representation of our circumstances, at these two periods of time; notwithstanding which, and to crown all our distress, we find ourselves now burdened with a vastly larger proportion of the public expenses than what we bore in the year 1767, and it is conjectured or guessed, that we are able to bear it.

Your petitioners would beg leave further to observe, that a great part of their interest consisteth of houses, stores and wharves, the value of which hath depreciated more than any other kind of interest. The reason of paying taxes is principally founded in present rents and profits, excepting in the case of wild and uncultivated land, which however yieldeth its profit to the owner by its increasing value. This being an established principle of taxation, and upon which the valuation in 1767 was entirely founded, it is plain, that an interest in the town of Providence of a house, stores and wharf, valued in 1767 at \$2000, and bringing in five per cent. or \$100 yearly profits, and a farm in the country of the same value, yielding the same yearly profits, ought to be taxed equally; whereas, it is an undeniable fact, that such an estate in town, at present, would not rent for more than \$50 per annum; and much less upon an average, and that the farm in the country would rent for at least \$400 per annum, and therefore they ought now, in justice, to be taxed according to



said yearly profits or as one is to eight, and instead of the houses, &c. growing more valuable, as is the case with wild land, they are daily decaying and exposed to the ravages and destruction of war more than any other kind of interest. This also applyeth in part to other sea-port towns, although none in the state have so large a proportion of this kind of interest as the town of Providence. We shall not mention the shipping which lies rotting in our harbor.

As to the comparative advantages which town and country have derived from the late rise of the prices of things amongst us, it is obviously much in favor of the country. The profits of privateering were shared by few, some of whom have moved away and carried their wealth with them, others have laid out their money in land in other towns and states, so that it is not now here to be taxed; and but few goods remain amongst us, which the country are disposed to purchase. They can, and do, live almost independent, while we are dependent upon them for nearly all the necessaries of life. The most rapid rise in prices was within a year past; if the merchants withheld their sale for a high price, when they rose to a high price, the country had the good sense not to purchase, being able to do without them. But in favor of the farmer, nature withheld the bigger part of the years' produce till the last fall, when country produce equalled, if not exceeded, foreign goods, and necessity obliged us to purchase his produce at that exorbitant price, which hath most amazingly drained, and still continueth to drain the town of its money, by which it hath happened, that the country adjacent in general enjoys more benefit from the high prices of things [illegible.] town of late than nine-tenths of its own inhabitants. [illegible.]

Having set forth many of these things at large in a former petition and remonstrance to the Honorable General Assembly, your petitioners will presume no further on your patience at present, trusting that we have sufficiently made appear, that the town of Providence ought not now to be taxed higher, if so high, as their proportion would be by the estimate ~~taken in~~ the year 1767, and that the uncertain, conjectural estimate of March 1777, is unjust and illegal and ought to be set aside and abolished.



Your petitioners, therefore, beseech and entreat you, by all the sacred obligations of reason, justice and humanity, that you would immediately and totally annul and abolish the said conjectural and illegal estimate of March 1777, and establish, ratify and confirm, that only certain, just and legal estimate, taken and established in the year 1767, as a standard and rule for apportioning rates and taxes unto and upon the several towns, until another new estimate or valuation can in like manner, according to law and the constitution of this state, be taken, approved and adopted ; and that you would forthwith take such measures that the same be speedily brought about and accomplished as to your wisdom and discretion shall seem most suitable and convenient."

From the latter part of this petition, it may be surmised that a jealousy between the town and country had been excited, growing out of the spirited action of the town relative to the act for stipulating prices of various articles. By repeated exertions and continual effort, that act had either been repealed or essentially modified before August 1777. This circumstance may, in part, account for the ill success that attended this petition. It surely could not have resulted either from any lack of argument in the petition itself, or from a conviction that the facts had been misstated. It produced a reduction in the town's proportion of a tax ordered in the following February, but not so great as to give satisfaction to the town ; besides, the estimate of 1767 seems to have been equally disregarded, in the apportionment of it. So far from producing a reduction in the taxes ordered in the preceding year, the equity of which seems to be acknowledged by this proceeding, they directed a suit to be brought against the town treasurer for the deficiency of the town's proportion of the tax of Au-



gust, which had been directed to be lodged in the town treasury. Force met force. The town advised their treasurer to be committed to jail on the execution. In May, a great number of the mechanics and laborers of Providence joined in a petition to the General Assembly for the reduction of the town's taxes. The representatives also proposed to exert their influence to have the arrears paid, in case subsequent taxes could be apportioned according to the estimate of 1767. The Assembly were inexorable. It appears by the proceedings of the town in June, that there was another execution against the treasurer for the town's proportion of the tax of December, for they then repeated their former advice to him, and John Brown and Ephraim Bowen agreed to be sureties for him in a bond for the liberty of the jail-yard. In case he acceded to this advice, he was to disregard the bounds and return to his home. Things remained in this unpleasant situation, until October session of the Assembly, when a new estimate was directed to be taken, immediately after which, the town directed their treasurer to pay up their arrearages. Thus ended this inglorious struggle. So far as the town by petitions, remonstrances and protests, opposed the imposition and collection of a tax which they deemed improperly apportioned, it must be accorded to them, that they were but exercising their legal privileges; and so far as the Assembly insisted in apportioning taxes, without regard to the legal estimate of taxable property in the state, it may be safely affirmed, they erred and exceeded their power. But it



lay with the same body to correct its errors by subsequent legislation. An attempt to compel such legislation by abuse of legal means, was an endeavor to arrive at a right result, by the use of unwarrantable measures. As before observed, the estimate of 1767 had beyond doubt become unequal. That would not however make it any the less imperative on the state. The remedy for that inequality was in the hands of the legislature, and was finally pursued by them. In the then situation of things, it seems to have been no easy matter to procure an estimate satisfactory to all parts of the State. One was adopted in July 1780, amended in November the same year, and again in May following.

In the year 1777 the occupation of so large a portion of the state by the enemy's troops, so interrupted the labors of the husbandman, that in the spring of the year following, there existed a great scarcity of corn. The prices had become extravagant, and there was a fearful prospect that the poor would severely suffer from want. To remedy the evil, the town, on the first of March, resolved to hire \$43,200 to be sent to Connecticut for the purchase of corn. They directed it to be insured if sent by water, and offered fifteen per cent. premium for insurance, from Connecticut river to Providence. They subsequently directed 100 bushels of corn and 12 of rye to be stored and sold out to the poor in small quantities. The price of corn, was \$20, and rye \$25 per bushel.

The nominal amount of money raised on this and similar occasions, is much, very much larger than the real value. Paper money had suffered a great



depreciation. Accounts were kept without regard to this depreciation. For the purpose of ascertaining the real value, different scales of depreciation were adopted by the General Assembly at different times. Annexed are two of them.

Scale of Depreciation, as adopted Nov. 1780.

1777, Continental.		1778 Continental.	
Jan. 100 Spanish milled		Oct. 100 Spanish milled	
Dolls. equal to	\$105	Dolls. equal to	\$500
Feb. " "	107	Nov. " "	545
Mar. " "	109	Dec. " "	634
April, " "	112	1779	
May, " "	115	Jan. " "	742
June, " "	120	Feb. " "	868
July, " "	125	March " "	1000
Aug. " "	150	April, " "	1104
Sept. " "	175	May, " "	1215
Oct. " "	275	June, " "	1342
Nov. " "	300	July, " "	1477
Dec. " "	310	Aug. " "	1630
1778		Sept. " "	1800
Jan. " "	325	Oct. " "	2030
Feb. " "	350	Nov. " "	2308
Mar. " "	375	Dec. " "	2593
April, " "	400	1780	
May, " "	400	Jan. " "	2934
June, " "	425	Feb. " "	3322
July, " "	450	March, " "	3736
Aug. " "	475	April, " "	4000

Scale adopted in June 1781.

From April 1, 1780, to April 20, one Spanish milled dollar equal to \$40 Continental, old emission.

April 25 equal to \$42		1780	
" 30 "	44	Sept 10 equal to	\$71
May 6 "	46	Oct. 15 "	72
" 10 "	47	Nov. 10 "	73
" 15 "	49	" 30 "	74
" 20 "	54	1781	
" 25 "	60	Feb. 27 "	75
" 30 "	62	April 15 "	76
June 10 "	64	" 20 "	77
" 15 "	68	" 25 "	78
" 20 "	69	" 30 "	79
Aug. 15 "	70	May 15 "	80
		" 30 "	160



Unaware of these facts, the taxes imposed by the state, during the years 1779 and 1780, would appear really immense, far exceeding in value the whole state. In the former of these years, they amounted to £495,000, and in the latter, to £1,940,000, besides \$26,000 in silver.

Such had been the alarming depreciation of the paper currency of the country, that Congress esteemed it their duty, in May 1779, to call the attention of the states and of the inhabitants to that subject. Meetings were holden, in relation to the matter, in all parts of the continent. On the second of July, the subject was taken into consideration by the town of Providence, and the following resolutions passed.

“1. That we will, to the utmost of our power, give effect to the salutary purpose of Congress, expressed in their late address, for restoring the credit of the Continental currency.

2. That, as, in our view, the most capital means of accomplishing this, will be, effectually to supply the continental treasury, we will immediately promote subscriptions in this town, for the purpose of loaning money to the continent. And we do also recommend to all others, to pursue similar measures; particularly those who have deposited money of the emissions of May 20, 1777, and April 11, 1778, that in lieu of their monies they receive loan-office certificates.

3. That we will co-operate with our brethren, the worthy citizens of Philadelphia and Boston, in reducing the prices of the articles enumerated, as well as others.

4. That the merchants and traders of this town be requested to convene, in order to ascertain the prices at which the several articles of merchandize ought to be sold in this town, so as effectually to unite and well comport with what may be done in the same way, by the merchants and traders in other places, and our brethren in the country, and report the same to this



town on the 20th instant; and it is recommended to the tradesmen and mechanics, to reduce their prices from time to time, according to the prices of merchandize and country produce.

5. That for the purposes aforesaid, we will appoint a standing committee, to address and correspond with the other towns in this state, as well as such committees in other states as may be appointed for similar purposes.

6. That we most cordially invite our brethren in the country, who command the necessaries of life, cheerfully to join us in so laudable an undertaking; as without their spirited concurrence, all our efforts must be ineffectual; assuring them of our sincerity and fixed determination to persevere, till the good purposes of Congress aforesaid shall be fully accomplished.

We must observe to the public, that we cannot entertain the least doubt but our present endeavors will be crowned with success;

Because, the United States have plighted their faith and pledged their estates, for the value of their currency, which sooner or later, it must obtain; and perhaps a gradual appreciation is best.

Because, the success hitherto attending our arms in the present campaign, affords us the most flattering prospects of a speedy and final expulsion of the enemy from our country.

Because, by the blessing of heaven, there is a prospect of the most fruitful season, for all kinds of produce, ever known in this country; and should the crops answer our expectations, their prices must of consequence be reduced.

Because, the large continental tax of \$60,000,000, and sums of money which we doubt not will soon be loaned to the continent, must effectually supply the treasury and prevent the necessity of future emissions.

Resolved, that the Hon. Jabez Bowen, Esq. Mr. John Brown, James M. Varnum, Jonathan Arnold, David Howell, William Wheaton, and Dwight Foster, Esqrs. or the major part of them, be, and they are hereby appointed a standing committee, to address and correspond with the other towns in this state, as well as the committees of correspondence in other states, agreeably to the fifth resolve of this meeting."



Another town meeting on the same subject was called on the 23d of the same month. It was then resolved, to hold a convention of delegates from the several towns in the state, at East Greenwich, on the second Tuesday in August following. The delegates from Providence were Stephen Hopkins, Jabez Bowen, John Brown, Welcome Arnold, and John Innes Clark.

The convention met on the 10th of August. Delegates appeared from twenty-four towns. They proceeded to fix the prices of the necessaries of life, of domestic as well as of foreign growth, to take effect on the first day of September. They resolved that he who demanded or received more for any article than the stipulated price, should be deemed an enemy to his country, and the committee of correspondence for the town where he dwelt, was directed to publish his name to the world. The inhabitants of each town were requested to state the wages of tradesmen and laborers, in proportion to the rates stated by the convention for the necessaries of life. They recommended to the General Assembly, to take immediate steps for raising the state's proportion of the continental tax. They appointed another convention to be holden on the first Tuesday in November. The doings of this convention were approved by a town meeting holden on the 20th of August. On the following day, a committee of inspection, consisting of twenty-four persons, was appointed, and another committee to state prices for tradesmen and laborers. They reported on the 31st. The prices stated were generally twenty per cent.



lower than those previously demanded. At the same meeting, Nicholas Brown, Zephaniah Andrews, and John Mumford, were appointed a committee to open a subscription for loans to the continent. But, as in a previous attempt to regulate the prices of articles, and thus prevent a further depreciation of the paper currency, these measures were found ineffectual. They do not appear to have been pursued at Providence, or in the state, with the same fervor that they were formerly. Perhaps the reasoning of a former town's committee on the subject had shaken the confidence in their utility or efficiency, and thus rendered them even more inefficient than they otherwise might have been. The fundamental error was in endeavoring to fix the value of a currency, which currency itself should be the standard of value, by the prices of the articles of merchandize.

By a census taken in 1782, it appears there were in Providence,

White males, under 16 years of age,	943
“ from 16 to 22	205
“ from 22 to 50	589
“ over 50	176—1913
White females, under 16 years of age,	903
“ from 16 to 22	293
“ from 22 to 50	727
“ over 50	179—2102
Indians, 6—Mulattoes, 33—Blacks, 252,	291
<hr/>	
Total,	4306

News of the definitive treaty of peace between the United States and Great Britain, arrived in Provi-



dence, on the second day of December, 1783. This treaty secured to the colonics, all that they demanded. The price they paid, for liberty and independence, perhaps cannot be estimated by any of the present inhabitants. We can count up the millions of dollars expended, and number the lives that were lost in that contest. But who can form an estimate of the sufferings of the inhabitants at large, and of the privations they bore, in raising that sum; or, of the affliction, and sorrow, and pain, that preceded and followed the deaths of the martyrs of freedom. Want and misery were not confined to the ranks of the soldiery; they pervaded all parts of the country and all classes of society. Pain, and sickness, and sorrow, did not revel merely in the camp. They spread their devastating influence to the home of the soldier. If he returned himself, he bore with him the seeds of sickness and spread them in his family, to blast his hopes of future comfort and joy. If he fell in battle, the mother, the wife, the child, drank of the cup of sorrow and suffering. The idea that can now be formed of the scenes of the revolution, must be very faint and imperfect. It may well be doubted whether the most vivid imagination can paint the picture with all its horrors. How grateful must have been the news of peace, under such circumstances, to the war-worn veteran and his care-worn family—peace with liberty, liberty with independence, all that he wished, nay, more than he dreamed of, at the outset, wrung from the grasp of the mother country.



## CHAPTER FIFTH.

### GENERAL HISTORY.

FROM THE PEACE OF 1783, TO THE ADOPTION OF THE CONSTITUTION OF  
THE UNITED STATES BY THE STATE OF RHODE-ISLAND, IN 1790.

At the close of the revolutionary war, the situation of Providence differed but little from that of other parts of the United States. During that struggle, this town contributed its full proportion of men and means. It is entitled to a full share of all the glory of that contest, and it received a full share of loss and privation. Although it was not, at any time, the seat of actual war, yet, its immediate proximity to the large body of troops posted on Rhode-Island for a long time, and the facility with which they could, at any time, attack Providence, subjected its citizens to frequent alarms, and to repeated tours of military duty. The return of peace must, therefore, have been hailed by them with great joy.

While the war continued, external dangers ensured the union of the states. The utter inefficiency of the articles of confederation, could never have been felt, under these circumstances. At the return of peace, individuals recovered their individuality. Different states ascertained that their interests were diverse and opposed to each other. Commercial enterprise engaged the attention of their citizens, and forced on them the conviction that further and



uniform regulations of foreign intercourse were necessary for their success abroad, and a firmer, closer union, indispensable, to secure their happiness at home. So long as every state possessed all the attributes of sovereignty, controlled only by the articles of confederation, little advantage could result from the liberty and independence they had gained. As peace revealed the weakness of the articles of confederation, it also disclosed the remedy for it, in the establishment of a general government, clothed with such powers as the states could not separately exercise, without ruin to themselves. It is believed that a large majority of the citizens of the United States were, at first, opposed to such a general government. They had not felt, in their business, the evils which oppressed the other classes of their fellow citizens, and they thought they saw in such a general government, the same foe to liberty which they had just vanquished. In the state of Rhode-Island, this majority was very large. It included far the greater part of all the inhabitants of the country towns, besides many of the inhabitants of the seaports. Generally, the seaport towns were in favor of such a central government, and none of them more so than Providence. In the state of Rhode-Island, these two parties had one cause to embitter them against each other, which did not exist in many of the other states. All the states were loaded with debt at the close of the war, yet most of them had the means of meeting their debts at some future time. It was not so with Rhode-Island. Almost from the first settlement of the state, all the expenses



of her government had been defrayed, by direct or indirect taxation on its inhabitants. She had no vacant lands within her limits, from the sales of which she could endow schools, establish charities, and defray her current expenses. For whatever of these was done, almost the only means, was the industry of her citizens, voluntarily taxed for these purposes. At the close of the war her state debt was very large, compared with that of other states. The principal part of it had centred in the hands of the merchants and traders. The landholders were also deeply in debt to them. Insolvency and ruin were before them. The most ready expedient for relief, was a new emission of paper money, the ultimate redemption of which should be secured by pledge of real estate. Debtors saw in this, the means of paying an old debt by contracting a new one, while creditors believed that the paper which they should receive for their debts would very soon depreciate, and become of little value. Some of the debtors, apprehending this depreciation as a necessary consequence, saw in it the means of compounding their debts, without a statute of insolvency. Hence a struggle between debtor and creditor, the merchant and farmer, in relation to the emission of paper money. In this struggle, Providence, of course, took part with the merchant. Their views in relation to the subject, are embodied in the following memorial and remonstrance prepared in Providence, signed by many of the inhabitants and others, being freemen of the state, and presented to the General Assembly at their February session, 1786.



“The memorial and remonstrance of sundry inhabitants of the town of Providence and others, freemen of said State.

That as well from opinions industriously circulated in some parts of the state, as from the proceedings of some towns legally assembled, there is reason to apprehend, that an attempt is soon to be made to induce the legislature of the state to put forth an emission of paper money. As this measure may involve the interests and fortunes of your memorialists, in common with their fellow citizens, and essentially affect the honor and well being of the state, they conceive that it cannot fail to be agreeable to those who are advanced to seats in government, by the voice of their country, to receive the most free and full communication of the sentiments of their constituents, to the end that such measures may be finally adopted, as may, in their issue, prove remedial of real grievances under which any class of citizens may labor, without entailing distress and ruin on others, or tarnishing the honor and character of a free and sovereign state. Notwithstanding the confidence that it becomes your memorialists to have, and which they are happy in this opportunity of expressing, in the abilities, integrity and information of the members of the present legislature, they beg leave to submit to their candid consideration, some remarks on the nature, tendency and operation of the measure in contemplation, relatively to several classes of citizens, as well as to the state; preliminary to which, they cannot avoid calling to mind,

That the better security of life, liberty and property, is the only reason for exchanging a state of nature for a state of government; and that government which affords the greatest security for these enjoyments, at the least expense, has been justly esteemed the best. A confidence in the honor and virtue of our fellow citizens on this side of the Atlantic, induced us to commit our lives and fortunes into their hands, and inspired us with fortitude to throw off all foreign dependence. After an expensive and bloody war of many years continuance, Heaven has crowned us with success, and we are now to reap the fruits of our labors under the mild and just administration of government, in the hands of men of our own choice—our neighbors, our friends and our brethren. It has happened in the course of the war, from various causes,



that some states, as well as some individuals in the same states, have made advances to the public service, out of all proportion to their abilities, compared with others. The period of account has at length arrived, with returning peace and plenty. The states in advance expect a credit, and to throw a part of their burdens on their sister states. The individuals in advance expect similar justice; that their burdens be spread equally, on the shoulders of their fellow citizens; trusting that the equal and joint efforts of all, will sustain with ease, those burdens which, falling partially, would bring on partial ruin and distress. It is the prevailing opinion, whether well founded or not, that the eastern states are in advance to the federal union on a just settlement, which is hoped for soon. It is certain that this little state has been second to none, in her exertions. But waiving the consideration of state advances, the certificates issued from our loan office, and other federal certificates, held by our citizens, form an aggregate debt of from eight to nine hundred thousand dollars, on a moderate estimation. If the actual circumstances of the United States could admit of our receiving a credit in the books of the federal treasury for this amount, or for the interest of it annually, this state's quota of the national debt would be settled, and no annual demand could arise against us, from Congress, other than for charges of the federal government. Is it not therefore the interest of the state to give effect to the just and constitutional measures of Congress for paying off this debt with honor? On this head, your memorialists have learned with satisfaction, the measures adopted by the state. A debt has also been incurred, which is ultimately to fall on the state. Your memorialists are not informed of the precise amount of this debt, but presume, that the care and fidelity of those in power, have not suffered the state to acknowledge debts to individuals, without a just consideration. The evidences of this debt are held, it is to be presumed, by the citizens of this state: the avails of the two and a half per cent. impost have been applied to pay its interest, and it is now suggested, that the operations of paper money are necessary, to facilitate its final extinguishment. Your memorialists hope, that after a fair and candid inquiry into the nature, tendency and operation of this measure, it will not be adopted.



The inconveniences of barter, or a mutual exchange of those articles which mankind deem useful, introduced, in the progress of civilization, the precious metals, as a measure of the value of things; but as commerce multiplied and extended the business of transferring the necessities, conveniences and luxuries of life, in higher stages of improvement, evidences of the value of these precious metals were substituted in their room, such as foreign and inland bills of exchange, bank bills, bonds and paper money. The operations of this paper credit, under certain circumstances, and to a certain degree, may be useful to a state, as well as to individuals. The single point of inquiry therefore is, whether, under the actual circumstances of this state, an emission of paper money is a wise and necessary measure. In whatever manner this measure be adopted, on whatever funds the paper is to rest, it must either remain at par with the precious metals, or depreciate. If its credit is supported, it will indeed be less injurious to individuals, but what good effects will it produce? It will not increase our circulating medium, unless it augments our business; for it is an established principle, that the circulating medium in a country, other things being equal, will always bear a proportion to the trade and commerce. The state therefore, which wantonly adopts paper, foolishly banishes the same quantity of the precious metals; and this consequence, your memorialists apprehend, would take place here; the silver and gold, which love not the society of paper, would be driven to our neighboring states. That a state paper money would not augment our business, but on the contrary vastly diminish it, must be obvious to any one, who considers the smallness of the state, the vicinity of its large towns to the large states of Massachusetts and Connecticut, many of whose citizens now frequent our markets, but in that case, finding no use for our paper medium, would be compelled to divert their trade, to their own markets. Nay, might it not be expected, that the best of our own produce, allured by the charms of silver and gold, would take the same route? Add to this, that while the paper remains at par, it would not be more in the reach of distressed debtors, than precious metals, if the dread of paper money was removed from the minds of monied men, and private credit restored, nor would any body be eased thereby, in payment of taxes, as produce



would fetch as much of one as of the other. For these reasons, your memorialists humbly conceive, that an undepreciating state paper money would do much hurt and could do no real good. The operations of a depreciating currency, then remain next to be attended to. Your memorialists humbly conceive, it would be a rare phenomenon in the political world, for a legislature to make paper money, with a direct and avowed intention to avail the public of its depreciation. What would this be, it may be asked, other than to make a promise, and at the same time confess you do not mean to fulfil it, or to fulfil it only in part. In case paper money, so emitted, should be suffered to expire gradually, it is evident it would operate as a tax on the community to its full amount. Should it be redeemed, at a depreciated value, the tax would indeed be less, but no less unjustly levied from the people. In both cases, the people would be taxed, not according to their estates, but in the compound ratio of the money they took and the time they kept it. This, your memorialists conceive, would cruelly oppress various classes of people and injure the public wealth; and this oppression would be still more intolerable, should the money, under such circumstances, be made a legal tender, so as to discharge the principal, or even to stop the interest of debts previously contracted. The operation of such depreciating paper, applied in payment betwixt individuals, would be no less unjust and cruel than its operation as a public tax. In this point of view, it would relax business, cut the sinews of industry, and enable sharpers and speculators to thrive on the plunder of the innocent and incautious. But here it may be thought unnecessary to enlarge, as it will doubtless be given out, and well stood to by many, that no depreciation is to take place. Your memorialists will not undertake to enter into the designs or secret thoughts of any, but as it has been already, as they apprehend, clearly stated, that an undepreciating paper money would not afford the relief aimed at, they cannot but be alarmed with an apprehension, that the money to be emitted is also to be depreciated.

Whatever may be the intentions of the advocates of this measure, your memorialists entertain no doubt but that the event will justify their present apprehensions. The quantity of paper in the hands of the citizens of these states, as evidences of the



federal and state debts, is already amazing. This cannot have escaped the view of any. Add to this, the bills or certificates issued by some states for payment of interest, the bank notes in circulation, and the obligations of individuals. All these descriptions of paper, do, in fact, obtain more or less circulation, and supply the place of a medium of commerce. The interest certificates to be issued under the requisition of September 27, 1785, and which are to have a general circulation, will make a great addition to this mass. Was there ever a time, it may be asked, before the revolution, when one fourth part so much paper was in circulation in this country? And it may be further asked, was there ever a time, when the citizens had less transferable articles, to employ and give motion to it?

It may be said, that large quantities of paper money were pushed into circulation during the war; but your memorialists conceive that to have been owing to a rare concurrence of circumstances. In the first instance, the precious metals in circulation did not furnish a sufficient medium for transacting the business which arose with the commencement of the war. Add to this, that the enthusiasm of liberty, and the points of bayonets, greatly contributed to the circulation of that paper, which, nevertheless, finally expired, though there was at that time, little of any other descriptions of paper in circulation. If these observations are well founded, it cannot be thought even within the possibility of things, that this state can now issue paper money, without depreciation. Whatever pains may be taken, by interested men, to divide the agricultural interest from the commercial, in this state, and to blow up the coals of faction and party, your memorialists entertain too high an opinion of the good sense and virtue of the substantial farmers in the country, to believe they can listen to the suggestions of a wily, selfish policy, or aim to build themselves up, at the expense of sacrificing the seaport towns and the commerce of the state. In that case, they must soon feel the sad effects of their ill-judged policy. Your memorialists presume that the landholders need not be told how intimately the rents of their estates, the prices of their produce, and even the rate of their taxes, are connected with the prosperity of commerce in the state, and that, to this prosperity



the solidity of the currency, the stability of public faith, and the punctuality in private contracts, are absolutely essential.

Let us, therefore, inquire into the effects of this measure, on several classes of people. The merchant brings his merchandize from abroad, and must make punctual remittances, or his credit and his trade are at an end. Paper money will neither pay his debts in Europe, nor purchase the productions of other states, to enable him to make payment; and it is well known, this state can furnish but very little. It cannot therefore, with any propriety, be expected that he should dispose of his goods, for an article for which he has no use. View next the shopkeepers and country traders, they too must refuse it, because it will not satisfy the merchant who supplies them. The farmer cannot take it for his produce, because the merchants, shopkeepers and traders have no use for it. The mechanics and common laborers may close the scene, for they will neither be able to pass it for food or raiment.

But it is worth while to consider, how far it is within the compass of power to give circulation to paper, under these circumstances, especially as there is reason to believe, from the prices of articles of produce in general, that there is no great real want of hard money, as a medium of commerce. It may indeed be made, and, if armed with penalties, be set in motion; but unless it can obtain a voluntary circulation, it will not proceed many stages, before it will meet with a dead set and expire.

Notwithstanding the preceding remarks, which your memorialists have taken the liberty to make, they must also subjoin, that they grievously feel and lament the distresses of the times, which they conceive originated from the desolations of the late war and the heavy debt thereby incurred, as well as from the embarrassments of the trade of the United States in foreign countries, and some impolitic restraints among ourselves. To these causes may be added, the almost total stoppage of the circulation of hard money, which adds a great artificial, to some degree of real scarcity of that article, occasioned by the apprehension of an emission of paper; and with great deference they take this occasion to submit for consideration, the propriety of the following measures, in their humble opinion calculated



to afford some degree of relief: an addition to the impost, perhaps chiefly on specific articles to be enumerated—an excise on spiritous liquors and other luxuries—a tax on horses—laws to encourage the raising of wool and flax, for promoting our own manufactures, and for reviving industry and economy among all ranks of people.

To conclude, your memorialists cannot take leave of the Honorable General Assembly, without assuring them, in the strongest terms, that they are sincerely disposed to contribute their best endeavors, to give effect to all measures calculated to promote and perpetuate the prosperity of this state and of the United States; but that they do not consider an emission of paper money as coming within that description. And as in duty bound will ever pray, &c.”

As they anticipated, the project was debated at that session, and rejected by a vote of nearly two to one. Gov. Greene, who had been chief magistrate of the state from 1778, exerted himself against it, and as a means of meeting the requisitions of Congress and the current expenses of the state government, proposed and advocated the passage of an act establishing an impost on certain articles, and an excise on liquors. The friends of paper money in the state were not disheartened at their defeat. They rallied at the spring election, displaced Governor Greene and his friends, and elected a Governor and Senate whose views accorded with theirs. At the May session, 1786, the project was again debated, and a bill passed, authorizing the emission of £100,000, securing its payment by pledge of the real estate of the borrower, and making it a tender in payment of all debts, then contracted. It did not pass without opposition, and the representatives of Providence entered their protest against it, reiterat-



ing the arguments which are contained in the memorial before copied.

It required but a very short time, under these circumstances, to verify the prediction that these bills would soon depreciate. The depreciation was sudden and great. At the session in June, the friends of paper money undertook to sustain its sinking credit, and to force for it a circulation. They passed an act, subjecting every person who should refuse to receive it at par with gold and silver, for goods, or who should do any act tending to discourage its currency, to a penalty of £100 and to disfranchisement. Upon the passage of this act, the merchants and traders closed their stores, and discontinued their business, as the only way of avoiding the penalties. To counteract these proceedings, and to compel the merchants to terms, the farmers who had mortgaged their farms for these bills, resolved not to bring any of the produce of their farms to market. The result was a total stagnation of all business. The distress arising from a want of corn and breadstuffs was such, and the prospects so gloomy and discouraging, that a town meeting was called, on the 24th of July, for the purpose of devising means of procuring a supply of these articles. The town then agreed to borrow \$500 and send it abroad to purchase corn to be subsequently sold and distributed by the town council among the inhabitants. To counteract these measures, the farmers called a county convention, of the county of Providence, to meet at Scituate on the 10th day of August. This convention adjourned to unite with a state convention,



for the same objects, to be holden at East-Greenwich, on the 24th of the same month. Delegates from sixteen towns appeared in this convention.— They expressed their confidence in the state government, their approbation of its proceedings, their resolution to aid it in carrying into effect the acts relative to the paper money then in existence, and such others as might be necessary. Providence was represented in this convention by David Howell, Welcome Arnold, William Rhodes, Jabez Bowen, and Joseph Nightingale. They acted with a small minority.

Upon the application of many citizens, the Governor called a special session of the General Assembly, to meet on the 24th of August. They still believed they could give currency to paper money by penal laws, and they amended the several acts before passed, giving a more speedy and certain remedy for any breach of the same. So eager had the majority become, to enforce obedience to the laws on this subject, that they lost sight of the rights of the people and jeopardized, nay sacrificed, their highest and dearest privileges to it. The validity and constitutionality of these acts came in question before the Supreme Judicial Court of the state, sitting at Newport, in the case of Trevett q. t. and Weeden.— After a very patient investigation, the court pronounced the acts unconstitutional and void. This made another session of the General Assembly necessary, and they convened early in October. After directing the judges to be cited before them, to answer for their decision, they proceeded to the form-



ation of another bill, to repair, if possible, the injury done by that decision to the currency of their bills. It bore the title of "an act to stimulate and give efficacy to the paper bills emitted by this state, in May and June last." It required every citizen, on or before a day certain, named in the bill, to give his solemn engagement, that he would use his endeavors to give the paper bills a currency equal to gold and silver, and that he would not offer any article for sale, which he would not sell as cheap for the one as the other. He who neglected to give such engagement, was declared incapable of holding any office of honor or profit, of voting for any such officer, and of giving testimony in any court of law. Under all circumstances, the General Assembly deemed it advisable to ask instructions of their constituents, before they passed a law containing such extraordinary provisions. The bill was of course laid before a meeting of the freemen of Providence, and was by them referred to Jabez Bowen, Nicholas Brown, Welcome Arnold, John I. Clark and Theodore Foster, to report instructions to the representatives in General Assembly. Their report was made on the 17th of October, in the following language.

"Your committee have attentively considered the aforesaid bill, submitted to the sense of the freemen of this state, by order of the General Assembly, at their last session, and as it appears in form of a bill and not of a law, they conceive themselves justified in expressing, with greater freedom, their apprehensions of its nature and tendency.

Some preliminary observations seem necessary to introduce the subject. The right to property stands on a basis no less



firm, than the right of life itself, as the former is the means of preserving the latter. Your committee conceive, that no proposition can be more unquestionable, than that, in a state of nature, every man has a right, to enjoy the fruits of his own industry, or to exchange them for what in his opinion, is an equivalent; extreme cases excepted. The social compact is entered into, to secure and protect this right, and not to supersede or take it away: and as in a state of nature, no individual could compel his neighbor to part with his property on any other than his own terms, it is clear, none could convey a right so to compel him, to his representative, in a state of government. The representative body, therefore, are not authorized to ascertain the value of the property of individuals and to decide on what terms, excepting by equal taxation, they shall part with it. In that case, there could be no private property, but all property would, in fact, be a joint stock and the property of the representative body; the idea of private ownership being done away. This is the situation of property under despotism, whether exercised by one or many. No subject is owner or master of any thing, though earned by the sweat of his own brow, nor allowed to stipulate any terms for himself in parting with it. If these observations are well founded, the General Assembly of this state, however they may be authorized to impose common and equal taxes, imposts and excises, and to ascertain the kind of money in which they shall be paid, will be found wholly destitute of power to touch the property of individuals, in the manner proposed by the test bill. It will, your committee conceive, be found no less out of their power, to compel the citizen to dispose of his vendible commodities for silver and gold or specie, than for paper money. Barter was the first mode of exchanging property, and the moment a man is deprived of his right to barter, or to sell for silver only, or for gold only, or for paper money only, or for any other description of what he may deem an equivalent, and on his own terms, that moment he becomes a slave.

Admitting it to be within the power of the General Assembly, to enact it a crime to refuse to take paper money of this bank or of any other, for others may and no doubt will be made, at par with silver and gold, your committee conceive, that the punish-



ment annexed to the crime, is excessive and against the rights of the people. The delinquent is to be "incapable to be elected to any post of honor or profit within this state, or to exercise the functions of any civil or military office therein, or of giving his vote or suffrage for electing any officer or representative within this state." This amounts to a very greivous disfranchisement, and in effect almost to a proscription. Your committee conceive, that citizens already under the sacred ties of allegiance to the state, and paying their just part of all public charge for their protection, ought not to be called to take further tests in this way, as conditions of retaining their freedom; especially, tests that do not regard their quiet and orderly lives, or the safety of the state in time of war, but merely, as in the present instance, relate to the considerations for which they are to part with their private property. The establishment of such a principle, your committee apprehend, would lay a foundation for endless contention and vexation, and issue in a dissolution of government. Any measure, however unjust or romantic, and none could be much more so, than the present attempt to pass this bank at par with silver and gold, might be fortified by the party in power with a test act, and all those who refused to comply therewith, disfranchised. Even a minority, and as it might happen a very small minority too, perhaps only those in power, at the spur of the occasion, with a very few friends out of doors, might in this way perpetuate their measures, and hold their seats against the voice of the great bulk of the people. What are our liberties, if we are to be deprived of them, in this way? The principles of our constitution must rest on ground more firm and safe.—This mode of punishment, therefore, for crimes of this sort, your committee are assured, is not only oppressive to individuals, but highly dangerous to the public weal, and so, unconstitutional.

The impropriety of a test bill will further appear, from the nature of the thing thereby required. All the freemen of the state and others, are required to swear or affirm, "that they will use their endeavors to give the paper money a currency, equal to silver and gold, and that they will sell their vendible articles, for the same price in one as the other." And in case of failure, "are to be punished for wilful and corrupt perjury."—Your committee do not understand the intent of the word "en-



deavor," as used in this bill, and so are not capable of ascertaining the amount of that part of the obligation of the oath. But if it means, that the declarant should sell, what he has not to sell, it goes too far, and if it means that he should induce others to sell, who are not disposed thereto, it imposes an officious meddling in the business of others. And what else can it mean, other than what is contained in the other clauses of the oath, your committee are utterly at a loss. It seems to be a general, uncertain and very exceptionable expression in the oath. Legislators have power to take away money from the citizens, as much as may be wanted for necessary public uses. But no constitution, within the knowledge of your committee, ever authorized a legislature to make the people take money of any kind. A tender of money, paper money as well as hard money, may stop interest on a lodgment of it in a court of law for the use of the creditor, or may extinguish the principal of the debt, if the tender or lodgment of the money, is the same as contracted for.— But in all countries, it is within the option of the creditor to refuse taking the money, in case he prefers subjecting himself to certain pecuniary penalties of a less greivous nature than disfranchisement even in despotic states. How shocking then to the feelings of freemen must this test bill appear, which has it directly in object, to compel the actual taking of the money, not only for debts, but for all articles exposed to sale, and to do this by imposing a solemn oath for the purpose, and to impose this solemn oath for this purpose, under the unheard-of penalty of disfranchisement. Your committee are humbly of opinion, that this attempt is without a parallel in the annals of mankind.

Your committee proceed secondly to consider the justice of the measure, and here,

1. Either the paper money is, in fact, equivalent to gold and silver, or it is not. In the former case, the proposed test bill is clearly unnecessary; for men readily enough discover and pursue their own interest, without laws to stimulate them thereto. In the latter case, if the paper money is not equal to silver and gold, every man who takes it at par is a loser thereby, and his loss will bear a proportion to the quantity of money he takes, and a compliance with the test bill would, in every instance, be a sacrifice of part of his interest.



2. It is incontrovertible that the paper money is already depreciated to three to five for one. If it was possible then, by any exertion, to raise it to par on a sudden, an unreasonable advantage would be thrown into the hands of many of the present holders thereof, at the expense of those who have passed it at a depreciated value. But,

3. From the principles and quantity of this bank of money, and from the actual circumstances of this state, if it was possible to give it a currency, in the first instance, equal to silver and gold, it would be wrong and unjust, because it must necessarily depreciate.

In the third and last place, your committee attended to the policy of the measure. And 1. The multitude of oaths to be hereby introduced, would tend to familiarize and render common, that solemn appeal to heaven. And, as in this case, where private interest is so intimately concerned, would not the strongest and most influential temptations to perjury be, every day, presented to the minds of those under the test. And would not many be caught in this snare, thus spread before them by the legislature, and the crying sins of innumerable perjuries be added to those of injustice and oppression.

2. There is no provision to give the measure a certain operation in any one instance. And, least of all, will it produce any effect where the chief malady lies. Merchants and wealthy farmers, who alone, by the articles they have for sale, influence money operations, will decline the test, for all may decline it, and what good effect will be the compliance of hundreds who have nothing to sell. In this position of affairs, would not the law prove nugatory? Would it not, in a short time, become obsolete, even though it should not be repealed or adjudged unconstitutional and void?

3. By the operation of this measure, all foreigners and their agents would be driven from the state, and their stocks and business wholly withdrawn. This would not only prove an immediate injury to many, who draw a subsistence therefrom, but would, in the event, throw a monopoly into the hands of a few designing men.

4. Your committee could not avoid considering the policy of this measure, as it regards the present rulers and their supporters,



who, it is to be presumed, if they are serious in their proposal mean to take the test and live up to it. Will they not tie their own hands, and leave the hands of others loose? While they are obliged, by solemn oath, to sell all their vendible articles for paper money at par, will they not see their neighbors, who refuse the test, selling for three or four prices, and accumulating interest at their expense? Will the vain phantom of an imaginary rule and sway in public affairs, countervail the loss of solid interest? But

5. Lastly, as a compliance with this test will thus operate to the injury of all who take it, your committee are decidedly of opinion, that although some who have not thought deeply on the subject, may be serious in this business, it can never take effect and prevail. On the contrary, it carries its own condemnation, written in capitals, on its very forehead.

Wherefore they beg leave to submit to the consideration of the freemen the following resolution.

Resolved, that the bill entitled an "An act to stimulate and give efficacy to the paper bills emitted by this state in May last," appears to the freemen of this town to be unconstitutional, unjust and impolitic, and that John Jenckes, Esq., John Brown, Esq., Major Charles Keene and Benjamin Bourne, Esq., the deputies appointed to represent this town at the next session of the General Assembly, be and they hereby are instructed to vote against said bill, and to use their endeavors to prevent its being passed into a law."

For the reasons in this report contained, or for some others as sound, the General Assembly, at the regular October session, negatived this bill, by a very large majority. This vote, however, is no evidence of any change of opinion in relation to paper money, or the proper means to secure it a circulation. The next state measure affecting particularly the town of Providence, was a bill introduced at an adjourned session, in March 1787, providing that each town in the state should have two representa-



tives in the General Assembly, and no more. This bill was also sent to the freemen of the several towns, for instructions to their representatives. The freemen of Providence referred the matter to David Howell, Nicholas Brown, Jabez Bowen, Paul Allen, and Levi Hall. Their report was as follows :

“ Your committee have been led to inquire into the constitution or fundamental laws of this state, relative to the doctrine of representation in the General Assembly, and find, that in the charter granted to this state, then colony, in the 15th year of King Charles 2d, the principles of which they presume themselves authorized to consider as forming the outlines of the present constitution, saving only such as were necessarily done away by the declaration of independence, among other things, it is ordained and declared, that “ forever hereafter, twice in every year, that is to say, on every first Wednesday in the month of May and on every last Wednesday in October, or oftener in case it shall be necessary, the assistants and such of the freemen of the said company, not exceeding six persons for Newport, four persons for each of the respective towns of Providence, Portsmouth and Warwick, and two persons for each other place, town or city, who shall be, from time to time, thereunto elected or deputed by the major part of the freemen of the respective towns or places for which they shall be so elected or deputed, shall have a general meeting or assembly, then and there to consult, advise and determine, in and about the affairs and business of the said company or plantation.”

In virtue of this clause your committee are of opinion, that the town of Providence hath a constitutional right to send four deputies to the General Assembly of this state.

Your committee also find, that in pursuance thereof, four deputies have been in fact chosen in this town, and have taken their seats in the legislature, at the sessions of the General Assembly in May and October annually, from the date of the said charter, down to the present time, and they do not learn, that it is even suggested, that said grant, privilege, and franchise, is or ought to be forfeited, either for non-user or mis-user, or for any other cause or pretext whatever.



Your committee proceeded in the next place to inquire into the powers of the General Assembly, and of the freemen, by towns and individually, to alter the constitution of this state relative to this particular, so as to deprive this town of half the number of its deputies, agreeably to the bill now under reference to them. And here your committee humbly apprehend, that the General Assembly are restrained and limited in all their legislative acts, by the constitution. They are, in fact, the creature of the constitution; they are brought into existence thereby, and empowered to act agreeably thereto for a certain term, and then sink back again into the mass of their fellow citizens; all their acts are liable to examination and scrutiny by the people—that is, by the supreme judiciary, their servants for this purpose—and those that militate with the fundamental laws or impugn the principles of the constitution, are to be judicially set aside, as void and of no effect. Here is the safety of rich and poor; here is a rampart thrown up against arbitrary power where it is most to be dreaded, as well as soonest to be expected, viz. in the hands of the sovereign.

Precarious indeed would be the tenure of life, as well as of liberty and property, held at the mere will of a popular assembly, sole judges of their own powers, of their own acts, and of the people's liberties. Six months is a short term, but it would be long enough to enable a wicked and corrupt set of rulers, not only to enrich and aggrandise themselves, on the plunder and ruin of the people, but also to take eventual measures to perpetuate their power, by passing legislative acts, taking out of the hands of the people, every means of redress. Wherefore your committee are decidedly of opinion, that the General Assembly have no powers adequate to the objects of this bill.

The powers of the freemen in town meetings, by instructions, are to be considered, in the next place. Let it be here noted, that town meetings are also held under the constitution and present laws, and they are also restrained thereby. It is of dangerous tendency, to let down the bars of the state and countenance town meetings in voting innovations in the constitution. It may be asked, what power the General Assembly has to throw out such a plan, by a legislative act, to the towns? The charter gives them no such power, and if they have it, as a grant from



the people, let it be shown. It may be convenient for the purpose of a faction; points may be carried this way. The party in power may require tests, and virtually disfranchise voters, and then call upon the towns to make such alterations in the constitution as to weaken their antagonists, to exclude half their members from the house. A bare majority of the towns may give such instructions, by a bare majority of votes, but to what purpose is all this? Are these fair and candid measures to establish a constitution? Do they not rather carry the appearance of undermining and destroying the constitution? There may be thirty towns in this state, sixteen towns may contain only one third of the inhabitants of the state. Half only of the freemen of these sixteen towns may assemble in town meetings. A bare majority of those so assembled, or a little more than one-sixth part of the freemen of the state, may consent to the alteration, while the other fourteen towns, or two-thirds of the inhabitants of the state, may vote against it, and in the event, instructions for the alterations may be carried up in this manner to the General Assembly, when a far greater number of freemen actually voted against them in town meeting, than voted for them, and when, perhaps, not half the freemen voted any thing about them; and moreover, when all those who did vote for the alteration, only voted away the privileges of the freemen of other towns, and thereby enlarged their own privileges in the state.— Whence it appears, that the very nature of this alteration is such as to render it an improper subject of such a reference to the towns, because, it is making them judges in their own cause.— It is in fact an adversary business, in which there are two parties in interest. The four original towns against twenty-six others. That the chance is clearly against the former, in this mode of decision, as twenty-six is to four; therefore, if this alteration is necessary or desirable, it is to be accomplished in a more fair and impartial manner.

It may be proper, in the third and last place, to consider what power the freemen at large have to alter or establish a constitution. Now it must be acknowledged, we have arrived at the true source and origin of power. The people can make or alter their fundamental laws at their pleasure. But here it is proper to pause and deliberate on the momentous undertaking.



To effect this great object, different methods have been adopted in different countries. The United States afford rare instances of the voluntary formation and adoption of free constitutions, by the people. But no instance has occurred to your committee, of a constitution being formed by the General Assembly of any state, and sent down to the freemen of the several towns and districts to be adopted by their instructions, nor has any instance occurred of any alterations being attempted in any of their constitutions, in this way. This might be equally dangerous, for under the idea of an alteration, principles the most radical and essential might be affected, and, in a short time, a total change take place, by the address and management of an intriguing faction in power; for which reason, this business seems never to have been entrusted to the rulers, for the time being, of any of the states. If a constitution is to be formed, or an alteration therein made, common prudence would suggest that the business should be committed into the hands of men specially appointed for that purpose, and who are not connected or interested particularly, in the administration for the time being, or disposed to make arrangements to favor the purposes of any faction or party. Such an arduous and momentous affair should be considered and digested in a convention of the more wise, cool and independent freemen of the state, specially appointed and assembled for that purpose, before it ever ought to be laid before the freemen at large, for their approbation. In such times as the present, whatever plan may be thrown out by the party in power, is almost sure to be adopted greedily by their supporters, and the more injuriously it may operate on the minority, the more certain it will be adopted by their adversaries. This consideration alone, drawn from the mode of making the alterations, in the opinion of your committee, would be a sufficient objection, even if the matter of it appeared ever so unexceptionable. Has it not been objected against the recommendations of Congress for altering the confederation, that they were for enlarging their own powers, that they stepped forward with an ill grace, in a business wherein they were concerned themselves, that they might have prejudices or sinister views of their own to promote; nay, have not these very objections dropped from the mouths of



members of the legislature, who are now fabricating alterations in the constitution and powers of the General Assembly, and urging them on the towns with great zeal and with all the weight of their influence, as public men and men in power.

Such has been the effect of these objections, whether well or ill founded, that not a single alteration proposed by Congress, in the confederation, has been adopted by all the states; and a convention is soon to be holden, of the first characters in America, other than members of Congress, for the purpose of revising the federal constitution. In like manner, your committee conceive, that if ever any alterations should be made in the constitution of this state, they ought to originate in a state convention, appointed for that special object and not otherwise. Your committee moreover are of opinion, that it would be unreasonable and improper to lessen the number of the deputies from the four oldest towns, even in case a new constitution should be framed, in the manner above proposed.

1. Because this franchise, enjoyed more than a century by these towns, has been considered and has become the right and property of the inhabitants, as really and fully as the soil with the buildings, the appurtenances and easements thereof, which have passed into the hands of the present holders, so privileged, and have thereby been held in greater estimation and value.

2. Because these towns, or at least two of them, being commercial places, have become very numerous, and as they have been heretofore, so they may become again, in better times, the receptacles of great wealth, and be assessed accordingly in public taxes, and therefore, on both these accounts, are well entitled to some preferential distinction in the representative body of the state.

3. Because the great number of small precincts in this state, incorporated into towns by the legislature, have exceedingly increased the number of deputies, and reduced the influence which the old towns had originally in the legislature, and as these little corporations have been created by the consent and votes of the deputies from the privileged towns, and under the expectation of their being protected in the continued enjoyment of this franchise, it would be ungenerous, and a breach of good faith, for



these little corporate towns, to turn against the old towns, in this particular, and to attempt to deprive them of the very franchise by the exercise of which, and on the grounds of which, alone, the little towns came forward with their claims, and were, in fact, brought into existence.

4. The idea that all towns in a state, great and small, are entitled to an equal voice in the General Assembly is chimerical, and unfounded in reason and good sense, as well as against the usage and custom of all places.

Your committee are of opinion, that no sober man would risk his reputation for common sense, on the assertion that two hundred freemen ought to have the same weight, in the legislative body, as four hundred, or that two hundred thousand pounds property is of the same consideration as four hundred thousand, in point of legislation.

5. If alterations in the representation are necessary to the purposes of just legislation, your committee are humbly of opinion, that at a proper time and in a proper method, they may take place, on just principles, and without such gross and palpable injury to particular towns, as would be done by the present bill. Suppose, for instance, that some of the larger towns, which now send two deputies, should be indulged with one or more additional deputies, and some of the least towns reduced to one deputy only. In some such method, and under proper authority, delegated for that purpose by the people, might not a scale be formed of six, four, three, two and one deputies for the several towns, much better according with their numbers and taxable property, than for every town, great and small, to send two deputies.

Lastly, your committee attended to the reasons or matter of inducement of the bill before them. They cannot conceive that such a number of deputies was granted to the four old towns, "to make a sufficient number to do and transact the public business," for the same paragraph ascertains, that two deputies shall be allowed to every other town, and provides that these grants shall run together, without limitation of time. And it is a well known maxim, that grants shall hold most strongly against the grantors and most beneficially for the grantees,



therefore, it is not to be intended that the grants of six and four deputies to some towns were made, on any other or less weighty reasons, than the grant of two deputies to the other towns; or that the former were to be of shorter duration than the latter. Moreover, your committee do not conceive the necessity of such numbers, at that time, to do the public business. They are not able to comprehend, how the public business is to be done, by main strength or by numbers, to better advantage than by wisdom and moderation, and a very few men might suffice, for all the purposes of legislation, at that time of innocence and simplicity of manners. The true reason for allowing the several towns to be represented, even at that time, by six, four and two deputies, appears to your committee to have been, in order to give the towns weight in the representative body, as nearly as might be proportioned, to their numbers and wealth; and this reason, instead of losing, has gained strength from that period to the present time.

Your committee observe, that another reason in support of the bill under reference to them, is drawn from the confederation of the United States in Congress, "that each state has an equal voice in Congress." But here it ought to be remarked, that the individual states are all sovereigns, and that sovereignty is a state and condition of such super-eminent and transcendent rank, that it acknowledges no superior on earth. There cannot, therefore, be a more or less sovereign state, although a state, which is sovereign, may be greater or less. If, therefore, delegates meet in a common council to represent sovereign states, from the necessity of the case, they must meet on a footing of equality and not otherwise. For if one state has two votes, and another but one, the latter cannot be more than half sovereign; a solecism in politics, for sovereignty is one and indivisible. There is, therefore, no analogy in the two cases, unless it is contended that the thirty towns in this state are so many sovereign bodies, possessed of independence and armed with the plenary powers of legislation and government, and that their deputies meet in General Assembly, as ministers plenipotentiary, or delegates, to advocate the sovereign rights and independence of the several towns. But this would be too extravagant to require a serious refutation.



Your committee cannot conclude, without expressing the pleasure they feel that the legislature hold the wisdom of Congress, in any particular, in such high estimation ; and they hope that another article in the confederation, will appear to the honorable legislature to be founded in equal wisdom, which provides, that no alteration shall ever be made in the confederation without "the consent of the legislature of every state." Should that wise provision be also adopted by the General Assembly relative to the constitution of this state, and the consent of every town held previously necessary to every alteration therein, your committee trust, that the town of Providence, as well as the other three original towns, will long remain in the enjoyment of all their just and constitutional rights and privileges.

Whereupon, your committee recommend the following resolutions :

Resolved, that it is inexpedient, in the opinion of the freemen of this town, at this time, to frame a new constitution for this state, or to attempt any alteration in the present constitution, and that it will be, at all times, of dangerous tendency for the General Assembly, for the time being, to frame a new constitution, or to make alterations in the present constitution, with a view to lay them before the several town meetings in this state for the adoption of the freemen.

Therefore, Resolved, that the deputies appointed to represent this town in the General Assembly, be instructed to reject the bill for depriving the towns of Newport, Providence, Portsmouth, and Warwick of a part of the number of deputies they have a right to send to the General Assembly, under the constitution of the state."

This proposition was also negatived by a large majority. Still the friends of paper money were a majority in the State. Yet, as they lived in the smaller towns, and more remote from each other, they did not so readily meet to encourage each other, nor were they so well drilled as the minority. The latter being residents in the large towns, and representing, if not the whole wealth, still the per-



sonal property, in the state, could easily assemble and mature their plans of operations; and they seldom lacked pecuniary means, where such could be supposed efficient to gain the end in view. In one other respect, the minority exceeded the majority—power in debate. Though many of the majority could at once detect the fallacies used by the minority in their speeches, still, from want of early training in the war of words, they could not expose them in public. These circumstances rather increased the rancor of party. The occasional rebuffs which the majority received at the hands of the minority, did not dishearten the one, while they excited the other to continue the contest.

At the same March session, 1787, further matter of dispute and contention between the same parties, arose out of the recommendation of Congress to the several states, to appoint delegates to revise the Articles of Confederation. The General Assembly, by a large majority, declined sending delegates; nevertheless, the convention was organized, and performed their herculean labor in the course of that summer. The result was laid before the General Assembly, at their October session, with the general request that the constitution reported might be laid before a convention. They directed it to be published, and circulated among the inhabitants; and at the February session, 1788, referred the question of the adoption of the constitution, to the freemen in their several town meetings. At this time, beyond a doubt, a very large majority of the citizens of the state were opposed to the constitution. Many who



heartily desired the establishment of a general government, equally desired to make some amendments to the constitution, as prepared by the convention. As this could be done only in a convention, and could not be effected in town meeting, it was known that, in this mode of deciding the question, they would vote against its adoption. Aware of this, the friends of the constitution opposed the measure in the General Assembly, and after it was adopted there, generally combined not to vote on the question, in their several towns. Town meetings were holden on the 30th of March. The whole number of freemen who voted, in the state, fell short of three thousand, while the whole number in the state exceeded six. The contest was carried on in earnest, in but very few towns. The friends of the constitution had a lean majority in Bristol and Little Compton, the only towns in which they succeeded. The meeting at Providence was holden at the Friends' meeting house. Soon after its organization, Samuel Sampson, an attorney at law, presented his vote against the constitution. Upon this, James Field offered his vote in favor of it, exclaiming, that he would tie that. Subsequently they prevailed on Mr. Field to withdraw his vote ; and as no other person voted on the question, Mr. Sampson won for himself the honor of being the sole freeman of Providence who expressed his opinion on that subject. The representatives of the town were instructed, by a large majority, to vote for a convention to decide this question. The following petition from the town to the Assembly, on the same subject, embodies the views



of the friends of the constitution, as they chose to express them. The committee appointed to draw it up, consisted of David Howell, John I. Clark, Thomas Arnold, Theodore Foster, and Benjamin Bourne.

The petition of the freemen of the town of Providence, in town meeting legally assembled, by adjournment, on the 26th day of March A. D. 1788, humbly sheweth

That your petitioners, being assembled in pursuance of an act passed by the legislature of this state in February last, submitting to the consideration of the freemen of this state the report of the convention of delegates for a constitution for the United States, as agreed on in Philadelphia the 17th of September, A. D. 1787, and feeling themselves deeply impressed with the weight and magnitude of the subject under reference to them, beg leave, with most respectful deference, to lay before the honorable legislature, the unanimous result of their most calm and deliberate considerations and discussions on this subject.

The formation of a constitution or fundamental laws for a state, your petitioners consider as the most arduous, as well as the most important, work to which the people can be called. It therefore seems to require, not only the exercise of the wisdom and experience of the people, but that this wisdom and experience should have full scope, to display itself to advantage, and that all the members should severally be put into a situation to profit and be edified by each other. The most natural and simple idea of the mode of proceeding in this business, among a people resolved into a state of nature, would seem to be, that all the people should be assembled on some spacious plain to consult on the subject, discuss and adopt a constitution for themselves. In ancient times and in small republics, this measure has been taken with success, but in the present case, where is the spot commodious for assembling all the freemen of this state? And where is the man who could be heard to advantage, by such a numerous assembly? In this method, therefore, in vain do we seek for the benefit of the wisdom of our friends, in other parts of the state, to assist our reason and guide our judgment, in this momentous affair. These



observations will yet become more striking, when applied to the federal union, and the doctrine of representation will force itself on our minds, in an instant. Such is the weakness of the human mind, in its most improved state, and such the shortness of human life, that it has been found necessary to divide and parcel out the business thereof into various hands, to the end that each may avail himself of the skill and experience of all others, in their various occupations, and a mutual dependence on each other, become the interest and safety of all.

Your petitioners apprehend that representation is a fundamental principle in the existing constitution of this state. The laws which operate throughout the state, are made by representatives of the people, and could not be regularly made by an assembly of all the freemen, or, acting at home in their several town meetings. In neither of which cases, could the parties to be affected more immediately by such laws, have an opportunity to be heard with convenience, and to have their reasons examined and discussed with candor and deliberation. When, therefore, a subject of universal concernment offers itself for the consideration and discussion of the freemen of this state, and which cannot regularly be passed upon by the ordinary representatives, assembled in their legislative capacity, in orderly pursuance of the existing principle of representation, other representatives, for the special purpose of deciding thereon, as it would seem to your petitioners, should be appointed.

The great federal convention held at Philadelphia, resolved that their work should "be laid before the United States in Congress assembled," and the President's letter adds, that it is "submitted to the consideration of the United States, in Congress assembled," by which expressions, it was clearly open to amendments by Congress at their pleasure, and we are informed, that such amendments were, in fact, proposed in Congress, but not adopted. The same great convention further give their opinion, that after their work shall have passed through the hands of Congress, it should be "submitted to a convention of delegates chosen in each state by the people thereof, under the recommendation of its legislature." This submission, being in general terms, cannot be understood as confining such conven-



tion to adopt or reject it in gross, and as precluding the consideration or proposal of amendments, nor has it in fact been so understood by the states of Virginia and Massachusetts. Before the convention of the former it is to be laid, by order of their legislature, for free and full discussion; and the convention of the latter have actually proposed several amendments. The whole agency of Congress seems to have been, to lay it before the states, as they received it from the convention. If therefore the freemen of any state are precluded from the benefit of proposing amendments, it must be done by their own legislature, and by no other body of men who have taken measures relative to this work. From the prevailing opinions throughout this union, from the acts of Congress as well as of most the legislatures of these states, and particularly from the acts of this state, granting to Congress the power to levy and collect an impost and to regulate trade, as well as from the actual embarrassment of public affairs and private distress and ruin of many individuals, your petitioners presume themselves authorized to believe, that the old confederation of the United States is not adequate to all the purposes of the federal union, and whether the proposed new constitution, is the greatest improvement thereon, remains a question to be resolved by this state, in common with her sister states in the union. The most eligible mode of proceeding in this business, therefore, is the simple point of enquiry. It occurs to your petitioners, that the mode pointed out by the act under present consideration is inexpedient and improper. Because,

1. In this mode the seaport towns cannot hear and examine the arguments of their brethren in the country, on this subject, nor can they in return be possessed of our views thereof; so that each separate interest will act under an impression of private and local motives only, uninformed of those reasons and arguments which might lead to common utility and public good.

2. Not only will much information be denied in this mode, but a full hearing of the cause will be impossible; for other states are interested, and their interests in many cases opposite to ours. How far it may be proper to sacrifice a state interest to obtain federal protection, requires great and deep thought, and how much power ought to be vested in Congress, to enable them to



vindicate the national honor, is not easily determined by those who are best acquainted with the actual circumstances of both the friends and enemies of the United States; yet, every individual freeman, ought to investigate these great questions in some good degree, before he can decide on this constitution.—The time, therefore, to be spent in this business, would prove a great tax on the freemen to be assembled in town meetings, which must be kept open not only three days, but three months or more, in proportion as the people at large have more or less information.

3. All the letters and papers containing the information aforesaid, could not be conveniently copied and dispersed into all the towns in this state, to be read to all the freemen; and in case they should decide, without an entire knowledge of the public affairs of the union, there could be no security for a just decision.

4. The mode pointed out, may exclude many of the freemen from voting at all. Votes are only to be taken by yea and nay. All persons, therefore, who are not ripe for judging by themselves, and wish to devolve it on a convention, are excluded from a voice; as likewise all others who may be decidedly in favor of certain amendments, and not willing to vote individually by yea and nay. The votes and influence of both these descriptions of citizens, will be necessarily excluded; and as those only who vote, can bind themselves individually, how are those to be bound, who do not vote? They are not represented, nor can they be bound under that idea, by the doings of their neighbors; so that after three quarters of the state may have individually voted for the new constitution, a principle is yet to be sought for, to bind the other quarter.

5thly. This mode of voting is in other respects indecisive; for the United States in Congress assembled, will not receive and count the votes of individuals, nor will they take a certificate thereof from the General Assembly, as a warrant to them to bind the state. They can only attend to the voice of a convention, duly authorized to act on the subject, and to bind all the individuals in the state, in virtue of their having been appointed their representatives for this purpose, agreeably to the line appointed by the federal convention. To what purpose then are



all the towns to be put to this great expense of time and trouble, to investigate and vote in this important national concernment, when all their doings will be void, and a convention must be finally had, before Congress can receive any information from the state, whether the new constitution has been adopted or rejected?

6. This method of voting deprives this state of the privilege of proposing amendments, which can be done and agreed to in a convention only. After having been excluded from a hearing, by the policy of the state, in the formation of the proposed constitution, would it not be a repetition of injury to the freemen of this state, to deny them the privilege of proposing such amendments as they might judge necessary, and of discussing the constitution, in the same mode as adopted by all the other states. Have they not a right, as composing one member of the Union, to have their voice heard on this subject, before a constitution shall be adopted by all their sister states, to which they must finally submit! This argument, in the view of your petitioners, will gain strength from the suggestion thrown out by some, in justification of the present mode, that the people are more enlightened here than elsewhere, and have a greater sense of freedom. If this suggestion is well founded, their voice was more wanted in our federal convention, and their remarks and improvements in a state convention to be brought forward and engrafted with the constitution, are more necessary. Have not the freemen of our sister states a right to claim this service at our hands, and have not the freemen of this state a right to demand it?

7. The present Congress, a body known and acknowledged by the state, having recommended the calling a convention for this purpose, and twelve states having complied therewith, your petitioners cannot avoid expressing their regret, that a mode of deciding on this question, so novel, ineffectual and injurious to the people of this state, should have been substituted in the stead of one recommended by a legal body, and sanctioned by such great authorities, and which, in every point of view, promises to be the best and only mode of putting an end to this business.

8. Your petitioners will only add, that in all events a con-



vention will become necessary. This state, however sovereign and independent, cannot exist without a connexion with her sister states; and if a convention be not held, at a period when the proceedings of this state might have an influence on the federal councils, and the doings of other states, one must sooner or later be held, to join in the general American Confederacy, after having lost all opportunity of influencing, or having any direction in the formation of that confederacy.

Whether, on the whole, it be advisable to adopt, reject or amend the proposed constitution, your petitioners beg leave to decline deciding in their individual capacities, for the foregoing reasons, which they have thought necessary to lay before your honorable body, in explanation of their conduct on this occasion. And they beg leave to offer the strongest assurance of their sincere love to their country, and attachment to the liberties thereof, as well as of their ardent wish for the establishment of an efficient federal government, on such principles as may secure to the states their necessary jurisdiction and power, and to individual citizens their just rights and privileges. And to accomplish these great objects, in the most regular, safe and satisfactory manner, your petitioners humbly pray this honorable General Assembly to recommend the calling a convention in this state, at such time and place as they, in their wisdom, may judge most for the public welfare.

No other state followed the example of Rhode-Island, in relation to the constitution. The legislatures of the other states, generally at the session next after the report of the general convention, called state conventions to consider and decide upon the constitution. Notwithstanding the acknowledged existence, at first, of a large majority opposed to it, in almost every state, still, before the first of June 1789, eight out of the thirteen states had adopted it in convention. The general convention had agreed that it should go into operation when adopted by nine states, and that from that time, the



old articles of confederation should be considered as cancelled. As one state after another adopted it, and the prospect of its going into effect increased, an intense anxiety seized the community. The convention of New-Hampshire was the next to meet, after the first of June. At a previous meeting, a majority of the members appeared inclined to reject it, and the adjournment had been had for the purpose of enabling them to consult their constituents. They met and adopted it. News of this auspicious event reached Providence on Tuesday, the 24th of the month, and was received with every expression of joy. The bells of the different churches rang their merry peal during the whole day, with little interruption. A salute of cannon was fired from Federal Hill at noon, and at other hours during the day. The schools were dismissed, and the students in college paraded the college grounds in procession. On the 27th the inhabitants held a public meeting to decide, "upon the most eligible mode of commemorating the anniversary of Independence, and of celebrating the auspicious event of the adoption of the Federal Constitution by nine states." They resolved to celebrate both events on Friday, the 4th of July. The Rev. Dr. Hitchcock, pastor of the First Congregational church, was requested to deliver an address on the occasion, at the First Baptist meeting-house. The Rev. Dr. Manning made the first prayer and the Rev. Mr. Snow the concluding prayer, and the benediction was pronounced by the Rev. Mr. Stanford. After the services at the meeting-house, a procession was formed which moved to the



land of Job Smith, on the plain at the head of the cove, by the papers of the day called Federal Plain. There, there was a table laid, more than one thousand feet long, under an awning. An ox roasted whole formed a part of the provision made for the dinner. It was supposed that between five and six thousand people partook of the entertainment. They left the plain about six o'clock, marched to the court house parade, and there dismissed, after giving thirteen cheers. The former part of the day was exceeding rainy; but there were other clouds which marred the festivity of the occasion. The nature, cause, and final disposition of these, will be learned from the two following communications, copied from the Providence Gazette. The first in order originally appeared in the United States Chronicle, at the request of "William West, one of the committee."

"On the 24th day of June last, the account of New-Hampshire's adopting the constitution reached the town of Providence, when a number of the leading men in the town, caused the bells to be rung on the occasion and repaired to Beacon Hill, where they spent part of the day in joy and festivity, expressive of their feelings on this occasion; but not content with thus solacing themselves in mirth and merriment, they soon concluded to have one general celebration of the adoption of the new constitution and the Independence of America, on the 4th of July inst., it being the anniversary of American Independence: which celebration was to be on the plain to the northward of the bay or cove. Here they proposed to have an elegant feast, consisting, among other things, of an ox roasted whole. To this celebration or feast they proposed to give a general invitation to the town and country. Accordingly, in the next Saturday's Gazette and Thursday's Chronicle, was inserted a general invitation to the town and country to assemble on this occasion; and likewise, special invitations were sent to his excellency the



Governor, the Deputy-Governor and Assistants, the honorable Superior Court, the Treasurer, Secretary and Attorney General of the State, besides which the inhabitants of the town of Providence were additionally invited by beat of drum and public outcry, through the streets.

The public at large, seeing preparations for so public a celebration of the adoption of the same constitution, which had already received the disapprobation and disgust of at least four-fifths of the individual inhabitants of this state, as well as of the legislative authority of the state, did thereupon, at once, perceive, that said entertainment in such a public manner, was intended as a public insult upon the legislative authority of the state, as well as the body of the people at large, and that their invitation to the particular officers, as well as the general invitation to the country, was intended as an aggravation to the insult; and that the celebration of Independence, as part of the occasion of said festival, was united in said invitation, merely for the purpose of alluring the country to join with the designing few at the social board, and thereby take occasion to represent to the other states, that town and country had joined to celebrate the adoption of said constitution, and insinuate that the opposition of this state to the constitution, was given up. On which consideration the country was roused with indignation and resentment against the artful and designing few, who would thus publicly insult the dignity of the state, and at the same time, thus craftily endeavor to allure the unwary, ignorantly to assist them in the prosecution of their nefarious schemes, and were determined, if possible, to prevent the celebration of the feast on the proposed principles and to support the dignity of the state. Whereupon, on the night previous to the intended celebration, they assembled in arms, to the number of about 1000 men, near to the plain where the ox was then roasting, and early in the morning of the 4th inst. numbers from all quarters of the country adjacent were collecting, and had not a compromise taken place, between town and country, it is reasonably supposed there would not have been less than 3000 men assembled under arms, by 12 o'clock of the same day. About 11 o'clock in the evening of Thursday, the town sent a committee to enquire what the country demanded, whereupon they were informed, that the



country had no objection to the celebration of any occasion except that of the new constitution or its adoption by any of the states; on which it was agreed, that a committee from each party should meet in the morning, with an endeavor to accommodate matters to the satisfaction of the country. Accordingly the committees were chosen and met at about 7 or 8 o'clock in the morning. The committee from the town consisted of Jabez Bowen, David Howell, Welcome Arnold, John I. Clark, Benjamin Bourne, Esqs., Col. Zephaniah Andrews and Mr. John Mason; the committee from the country consisted of William West, Esq. Capt. Andrew Waterman, Abraham Mathewson, John Westcott and Peleg Fisk, Esqrs., Col. John Sayles and Capt. James Aldrich; and upon their conferring together about an hour, it was agreed, on the part of the town, that they would not celebrate the day on account of the adoption of the new constitution by nine states, or on account of said constitution in any respect whatever; that no salutes should be fired or toasts drank in honor of said constitution, or in honor of any state or states which have adopted said constitution—that they would honor the day by a discharge of 13 cannon and 13 only—that the celebration of the day should be in honor of the independence of America and that only—and that they would not publish or cause to be published any account contrary to said agreement. In consideration whereof, it was agreed, on the part of the country, that the men then under arms should withdraw from the field and suffer the town to go on with their feast, according to the aforesaid agreement, in peace and quiet. Then one member from each committee went to the troops under arms and declared to them the particulars of the aforesaid agreement, whereupon they retired, in pursuance of said agreement."

"Mr. Carter,—Your last Gazette announced to the public the manner in which Friday, the 4th instant, was celebrated in this town. From a regard to the honor of the state, and to the feelings of some of our fellow citizens, no mention was made of the appearance of a number of persons under arms, from the country, on the morning of that day. But in vain was this friendly purpose to cast the veil of charity and oblivion over that rash and ill-judged attempt.



Whether from the vain glory of boasting of a supposed victory, or the still more unaccountable vanity of being known to the world as the leader of a mob, a lengthy publication on that subject has been thought necessary by one of the judges of the Superior Court of this state. It has therefore now become an indispensable duty to publish those proceedings, in their true light, as well for the reputation of the gentlemen who contributed to defray the expense of the feast, as to vindicate that of those gentlemen who went out of town to disperse the rioters. On certain information received in the morning of that day, that some disorderly persons, with loaded guns, were lurking in the woods in the vicinity of the town, a number of gentlemen, about 7 o'clock, went out to treat with their leaders to disperse them. On their arrival at Col. Christopher Olney's, they were informed by William West, Esq., one of the judges of the Superior Court, Capt. Andrew Waterman, and John Sayles, Esq., both members of the Honorable General Assembly, who appeared to be their principal leaders, that their intention was to prevent any rejoicing on account of the adoption of the new federal constitution. On this occasion, the gentlemen from town remarked, that it gave them pain to think that the repose of society should be interrupted in such a manner, to effect a purpose of that kind—that had any persons dissatisfied in the country, seasonably intimated that any demonstrations of joy on that account would be revenged by military execution, their regard for the apprehension and alarm in the aged and infirm, of the women and children of the town, which would necessarily be excited on such an occasion, and very distressing, would have induced them to have forborne a gratification so trivial, whatever their martial feelings might have suggested to the contrary; but that no intimation of this sort had been made, on the part of any dissatisfied in the country, till the preparations for the festival were completed—that the festival was to be held on the anniversary of Independence, an event, in the celebration of which, it was presumed, all could unite—that none were to be compelled to attend, nor to be molested by any of the transactions of the day—that the festival would be attended on lands which were private property, and by consent of the owners of the soil—that all the monies to be expended, were raised by



voluntary contribution—that it seemed a stretch of power, alarming to freemen, to attempt in such a rude manner, with guns and bayonets, to surround and disturb persons only eating and drinking, and making merry on their own lands, at their own expense, in the peace of the governor and company, and free from even the suspicion of the actual breach of any known law—that if any law had been broken or should be broken, legal prosecution was open, and the present administration on their side, according to their account—that the laws would afford ample remedy for all offences, either against the state or individuals in this case—that a legal remedy would be more honorary to them, than any they could take by violence, as well as more for the credit of the present administration, several of whom were in the insurrection—that the liberty of thus sitting under our own vines and fig trees, without any to make us afraid, was an object for which we had long and obstinately contended, and in that contest, the independent corps in the town, as well as the town militia, had borne too conspicuous a part, to permit any apprehensions to take place derogatory to their military character, whenever an occasion might present, in which it might worthily be put to the proof—that it could not be expected that the ground would be yielded, or the property given up—that it was, however, the wish of all concerned, to pacify the minds of the persons under arms, and to disperse them, that the remainder of the day might be otherwise employed—that no punctilio or affair of etiquette, would induce them to turn the day into a day of blood, in which case even a victory would prove a defeat, and would tend to fix and perpetuate animosity betwixt the parties, which the festival was calculated to eradicate and destroy. They were then requested to reduce their grievances to precision, on which John Sayles, Esq., said that if thirteen cannon were fired, and thirteen toasts drank, and none of them in honor of the nine states, he should be satisfied. It was then remarked to them, that thirteen cannon had actually been fired at sunrise, and that no other number had been ordered on any part of the day; that thirteen toasts had been ordered originally, and a list of them was shown, which were afterwards drank and published. In this list, an al-



teration had been previously made, to please Squire Sayles, of the thirteenth toast, from "the nine states," to "the day," the only alteration, and which was considered to be only an alteration in words. This alteration, the gentlemen from the town agreed to observe, with which the other party was satisfied, and declared that they had no objection against the feast's being celebrated, in all other respects conformably to the original orders, and pledged themselves that their people under arms should be instantly dispersed, which was accordingly done. The general alarm, beat all over the country by ill-minded persons, had drawn a considerable concourse of people together; but the number of persons who assembled with hostile purposes, was estimated, by indifferent persons, at about three hundred, and not more, nearly half of whom were armed with guns, others with clubs, &c. They were drawn together during the darkness of the preceding night. It was noticed that not a man left the cover of the woods, to show himself on the plain, although it was late in the morning before Col. Tillinghast's company of the train, and the militia under Col. Whipple, took their posts on the ground.

Many of the people from the country, after their leaders had failed in carrying off the ox that night, roasting whole on the plain, which, it seems was their original purpose, for they were told that it was unnecessary to bring any provisions with them, and had made terms no more to their advantage or honor, left their arms behind them and joined in partaking of the entertainment. Some who had cash, bought victuals at Mr. Hoyle's tavern, and other places, and others, returned home in the rain, hungry, tired and repenting their folly. Those people in the country who were dissatisfied, seem to have been alarmed by misinformation, some apprehending that the feast was really to fix the new constitution on this state, while others apprehended, that the militia were actually ordered to assemble by lawful authority, and that either the Governor or Deputy-Governor was to take command of them. Many of those who had guns, came without powder, and were told that they would be supplied with stores in town. On better information, some returned before they arrived in the vicinity of the town, and many of those assembled near the plain appeared chagrined to find, that an affair



which, in the country, had been magnified into a mountain, on a nearer approach appeared to be only a mole hill ; and being glad of the appearance of an excuse for desisting from the rash attempt, on hearing the explanations given to their leaders, readily dispersed. Two reflections will close these observations.

1. Unhappy indeed are the times into which we are fallen, when armed violence is preferred to the laws of the land, even by those whose duty it is to administer them. 2. Such is the nature of the human mind, that after a habit of sporting with the properties of mankind, it rises to such a pitch of depravity, as to sport with their lives.

JABEZ BOWEN,	} In behalf of themselves and others of the committee.
JOHN I. CLARK,	
WELCOME ARNOLD,	
ZEPHANIAH ANDREWS,	

It is painful to recall to mind the existence of such a state of feeling as the documents exhibit. That the citizens of Providence had a perfect right to roast an ox whole, or any other animal, on this or any other occasion, it is presumed the survivors of the army of the country will readily admit. Surely there would be little joy or rejoicing in the world, if we waited for an occasion, in which all could unite. They could far better judge of the expediency of their proceedings than we can at this day. But if they were over polite, or even if certain individuals of them used highly opprobrious language to certain of their opponents, it could not take from them their right to eat the meat they paid for, much less confer on any others, the right to dictate in relation to it. Certain it is, the threats used on this occasion did not deter the citizens of Providence from any manner of rejoicing they deemed expedient, at such times as they chose. For instance, the next day, July 5, the news reached Providence that the con-



vention of Virginia, had adopted the constitution.— They rang their bells, and formed a procession supposed to contain one thousand persons, which paraded through the principal streets of the town. The Artillery company fired a salute of ten guns, which was answered by some larger cannon from Federal Hill. On the 29th of the same month, they deemed they had further cause of rejoicing, on hearing that New-York had adopted the constitution. On that occasion the bells sent forth another merry peal. They decorated the south side of Weybosset Bridge with eleven large national flags, representing the eleven states which had adopted the constitution, in the order of their adoption, bearing the names of the states, the times of their adoption and the majority by which it was carried. On the north side of the bridge was a standard for North Carolina, the staff of which leaned about thirty degrees from a perpendicular, with a small banner below, bearing the motto, “It will rise.” A bare pole, forming an angle of about forty-five degrees with the horizon represented, “Rhode-Island in hopes.” A procession was formed of the citizens, which moved through the principal streets to Federal Hill, to do homage to the standard borne in the revolutionary war by Col. Olney’s regiment, which was there floating in the breezes of Heaven. The roar of eleven cannon, at three several times during the day, proclaimed the cause of their rejoicing.

The new government of the United States, under the constitution was organized at New-York, on the 4th of March 1789. This event rendered a



session of the General Assembly necessary about the same time to provide for the foreign relations and commerce of the Empire of Rhode-Island. The representatives of Providence received the following instructions from their constituents, on this occasion.

Gentlemen, Eleven states having acceded to and fully ratified the new constitution, and the government of those states under that system being completely organized, and in full operation, a new era, in the political affairs of this country, has taken place. The situation of the state of Rhode-Island in this conjuncture, is perfectly novel, and, in the apprehensions of your constituents, extremely critical. Separated as we are from the states which compose the present union, we stand perfectly alone, unconnected with any state or sovereignty on earth. As we can claim no right to the flag of the United States, our commerce and navigation are deprived of national protection. The benefit of commercial treaties, formed by European nations with the United States, will no longer be extended to the citizens of Rhode-Island. All trade with the new confederated states, will probably soon be interdicted to the citizens of this state, except on the footing of foreigners, and of course, on the payment of exorbitant duties. Subjected to these injurious restrictions and disadvantages, our commerce and navigation, already extremely embarrassed, must be annihilated ; and the ports of the state of Rhode-Island, which but a few years since were crowded with shipping, will afford shelter to only a few fishing craft. The loss of our commerce will inevitably be attended with the most ruinous consequences to agriculture and manufactures. To this stage of degradation and wretchedness will the state, in all probability, be reduced, should the legislature persist in refusing to call a convention for adopting the new constitution. Indeed, in the apprehension of your constituents, a perseverance in this refusal will endanger the very existence of the state. Should the state again negative the calling a convention, your constituents are fully persuaded, that some of their fellow citizens will apply for the protection of the new government to be extended



to their trade and navigation, under such discriminations as the wisdom of Congress may suggest. Your constituents anticipate the most ruinous consequences, both to the state and individuals, in a continuance of our separation from the other states. We most ardently wish, that this state may soon be re-united with her late sister states, under a form of government calculated to promote their mutual welfare and prosperity. As this state was deprived of a voice in the organization of the new constitution, we are the more solicitous that we may have some agency in the revision and amendment of it, which probably will soon take place, not in a national convention, as some have supposed, but in the Congress, in the first instance, who will form and propose the amendments to the state legislatures; and by them, in the second place, on whom it will be incumbent to ratify or reject the amendments proposed. Impressed with these sentiments, anxious for a re-union with the other states, and dreading the ruinous consequences of a separation from them, we do again enjoin it upon you, to use every legal and constitutional means in your power at the present session, to obtain a legislative act, for the calling, immediately, a convention of delegates from the several towns in this state, for the purpose of deciding on the new constitution.

The phalanx of the majority in the General Assembly remained unbroken. The vote against calling a convention was not diminished by the circumstances which attended the state, nor by fear of any dangers in the future. At the following May session, the subject is again brought before them by the following petition.

“ We, the subscribers, citizens and freemen of the state, beg leave to assure your honors, that this address is not founded upon sinister or party views, but upon the purest sentiments of regard for the welfare and prosperity of the state at large.

We need not adduce many arguments, to prove the advantages of commerce, to a people in our situation; they are obvious. From thence, not only our numerous tradesmen, mechanics and laborers, citizens so useful to a state, derive subsistence for



themselves and families, but the cultivators of the land, who would otherwise raise nothing more than they consume, are, by finding a market for the surplus, excited to industry, and add in a much greater degree to the strength and importance of the state. In short, commerce, deriving reciprocal support from agriculture, is the great fountain from which flow our numbers, wealth and respectability. With the deepest concern, we have beheld it of late declining. Our youth, brought up in the habits of industry and knowledge of business, and promising to become most useful members of society, are driven to settle in other states, to look for that business they cannot find here. Many industrious tradesmen and mechanics, are compelled to emigrate for want of employment, and many more who once lived in a comfortable manner, are now distressed, and only waiting to dispose of their property, to remove also. All which, we conceive to have been principally occasioned for the want of competent power in the Congress of the late United States to preside over, regulate and direct, the whole of our trade, both foreign and domestic, upon a wise and uniform system.

Melancholy as this picture is, our future prospects are worse, beyond comparison. The Congress of the eleven United States have already made great progress in framing a bill, laying such heavy imposts upon all articles transported from hence to any of them, as well those of the growth and manufacture of this state, as foreign merchandise, as will amount to a prohibition. The operation of this statute will necessarily and immediately cause a general stagnation of commerce, as we cannot supply cargoes for foreign markets, without the articles imported from the other states in the late union; the consequence whereof, will inevitably involve us in a distress truly deplorable. Were it necessary, we might enlarge upon the following topics—that we have not an alliance or treaty of commerce with any nation upon earth—that we are utterly unable to defend ourselves against an enemy—and, that we have no rational prospect of protection and defence, but from the United States of America. We see no hope of relief but in joining the United States, under the new constitution. We are sensible of the many exceptions that have been made to it. But as we have no doubt that



such amendments will take place, as will obviate all the principal objections, and that it will, under the auspices of the most illustrious Washington, be carried into operation, with the general approbation of the United States; and, as we cannot possibly exist as an independent state, unless united with them, we are humbly of opinion, that wisdom and sound policy require us to send members, as early as possible, to the new Congress, as thereby this state will have a voice in proposing and making all necessary alterations in the constitution, as well as in levying imposts and making the necessary regulations of trade.

We do, therefore, deeply impressed with a sincere regard for the public welfare, and with all the earnestness becoming the importance of the subject, humbly entreat your honors to call a state convention, agreeably to the resolve of the General Convention, held at Philadelphia, in September, A. D. 1787, and the consequent recommendation of Congress, for the purpose of joining the eleven states which have already united under the new constitution."

Equally unavailing was this petition, with the other measures pursued. The petition was received and referred to a future session for consideration. Providence, at this session, renewed her instructions to her representatives, and as before, they obeyed to the very letter; still they were in a minority. The legislation of the first Congress, it was expected, would be highly injurious to the citizens of Rhode-Island engaged in Commerce. Congress could consider them only as foreigners, and subject them to duties as such. Moved by fear of this, the free-men of Providence held a town meeting in August, and appointed a committee consisting of James Manning, Benjamin Bourne, Thomas Arnold, Nicholas Brown, Theodore Foster, Welcome Arnold and John Brown, to draft a petition to Congress, praying their mercy in this respect. They reported the



following form, which was signed by the moderator and clerk, and transmitted by the hands of Dr. Manning and Mr. Bourne.

“To the President, the Vice-President, the Senate, and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled.

The petition of the freemen of the town of Providence, in the State of Rhode-Island and Providence Plantations, legally convened in town meeting, on the 27th day of August, A. D. 1789, most respectfully sheweth,

That during the arduous struggle of our country for the preservation of her rights, liberties and independence, in the late war with Great Britain, this town was particularly noted for its attachment to, and its advances and exertions for, the support of the common cause of the United States. Sensible that our most essential interests depended on our being in the Union, and that the former confederation was unequal to its exigencies, we made every effort to obtain delegates to be sent from this state to the General Convention, which met at Philadelphia, in 1787. After the proceedings of that convention were published, this town, pleased with the spirit of liberty, tempered with energy and responsibility, which so strikingly pervades the new constitution, made the most unremitting exertions for obtaining a convention of the state for its adoption.

We have not hitherto succeeded, but it is with great satisfaction, we have it in our power to inform Congress, that from the recent election of the members of our lower house of Assembly, there is a probability that this desirable event will soon take place. We now experience the unhappy consequence of our not belonging to the Union, in being subjected to the same imposts and tonnage, as foreigners, which, considering our intimate connexion with the United States, and our dependence upon them for the means of our subsistence, operates in a most grievous manner against the seaport towns of this state, who have been generally supplied, as well by land as water, with fire-wood, corn, flour and other necessary articles, from the states now in the Union; and should our trade and communication with them



continue to be restricted, as at present, our situation will be truly wretched.

We claim an original relation to the American Congress, and are fully sensible that we cannot exist independent of the friendship and good will of our sister states. And as we hope the formal accession of this state to the new constitution is not far distant, and as our separation from the union can by no means be imputed to the seaport towns, the inhabitants whereof are, almost unanimously, zealous advocates for the new constitution; and as a continuance of the above mentioned restrictions on the inhabitants of this state will accumulate unmerited distress upon that part of the community which has been most firmly attached to the union; and as we cannot but hope that the benign disposition of Congress, towards the agricultural part of the state, manifested in the admission of their produce and manufactures duty free, will also be extended to the seaport towns;

We therefore, most humbly entreat the attention of Congress to our distressed situation, and that they will be pleased to grant, for such time as to them in their wisdom shall appear proper, that the vessels belonging to the citizens of this state, may be admitted to entry in the ports of the United States, exempt from the payment of foreign tonnage in the same manner as vessels belonging to their own citizens; and that foreign merchandize, on importation by the citizens of this state, into the United States, by land or water, shall be subject only to the same duties and restrictions as by law are required of their own citizens. And as in duty bound will ever pray, &c.

Signed, by the unanimous order of the town,

WELCOME ARNOLD, Moderator,

DANIEL COOK, Town Clerk.

At the ensuing September session of the General Assembly, they prepared an address and petition to Congress on the same subject. As it comprises many of the arguments of the opposers of the constitution, it is inserted at length.

The General Assembly of the state of Rhode-Island and Providence Plantations—to the President, the Senate, and House of



Representatives of the eleven United States of America in Congress assembled.

The critical situation in which the people of this state are placed, engages us to make these assurances, on their behalf, of their attachment and friendship to their sister states and of their disposition to cultivate mutual harmony and friendly intercourse. They know themselves to be a handful, comparatively, and although they now stand, as it were, alone, they have not separated themselves or departed from the principles of the confederation which was formed by the sister states in their struggle for freedom and in the hour of danger. They seek, by this memorial, to call to your remembrance, the hazards which we have run, the hardships we have endured, the treasure we have spent and the blood we have lost together, in one common cause, and especially, the object we had in view, the preservation of our liberty; wherein, ability considered, they may truly say, they were equal in exertions to the foremost; the effects whereof, in great embarrassments and other distresses consequent thereon, we have since experienced with severity; which common sufferings and common danger, we hope and trust yet form a bond of union and friendship, not easily to be broken. Our not having acceded to, or adopted the new system of government, formed and adopted by most of our sister states, we doubt not has given uneasiness to them; that we have not seen our way clear to do it, consistent with our idea of the principles upon which we all embarked together, has also given pain to us; we have not doubted but we might thereby avoid present difficulties, but we have apprehended future mischiefs.

The people of this state, from its first settlement, have been accustomed and strongly attached to a democratical form of government. They have viewed in the new constitution, an approach, though perhaps but small, toward that form of government from which we have lately dissolved our connexion, at so much hazard, and expense of life and treasure. They have seen with pleasure, the administration thereof, from the most important trust downward, committed to men who have highly merited, and in whom the people of the United States place unbounded confidence; yet even in this circumstance, in itself so fortunate, they have apprehended danger, by way of precedent.



Can it be thought strange then, that with these impressions, they should wait to see the proposed system organized and put in operation, to see what further checks and securities would be agreed to and established by way of amendments, before they could adopt it, as a constitution of government for themselves and their posterity? These amendments, we believe, have already given some relief and satisfaction to the minds of the people of this state, and we earnestly look for the time, when they may, with clearness and safety, be again united with their sister states under a constitution and form of government, so well poised, as neither to need alteration or be liable thereto by a majority only of nine states out of thirteen, a circumstance which may possibly take place against the sense of a majority of the people of the United States. We are sensible of the extremes to which democratical government is sometimes liable, something of which we have lately experienced, but we esteem them temporary and partial evils, compared with the loss of liberty and the rights of a free people; neither do we apprehend they will be marked with severity by our sister states, when it is considered, that during the late troubles, the whole United States, notwithstanding their joint wisdom and efforts, fell into the like misfortune; that from our extraordinary exertions, this state was left in a situation, nearly as embarrassing as that during the war; that in the measures which were adopted, government unfortunately had not that aid and support from the monied interest, which our sister states of New-York and the Carolinas experienced, under similar circumstances, and especially, when it is considered, that upon some abatement of that fermentation in the minds of the people, which is so common, in the collision of sentiments and of parties, a disposition appears, to provide a remedy for the difficulties we have labored under on that account. We are induced to hope, that we shall not altogether be considered as foreigners, having no particular affinity or connexion with the United States, but that trade and commerce, upon which the prosperity of this state much depends, will be preserved as free and open between this and the United States, as our different situations at present can possibly admit, earnestly desiring and proposing to adopt such commet-



cial regulations on our part, as shall not tend to defeat the collection of the revenue of the United States, but rather to act in conformity thereto or co-operate therewith, and desiring also to give the strongest assurances that we shall, during our present situation, use our utmost endeavors to be in preparation, from time to time, to answer our proportion of such part of the interest or principal of the foreign and domestic debt, as the United States shall judge expedient to pay and discharge. We feel ourselves attached, by the strongest ties of friendship, of kindred and of interest, to our sister states, and we cannot, without the greatest reluctance, look to any other quarter for those advantages of commercial intercourse, which we conceive to be natural and reciprocal between them and us.

Notwithstanding the appearance of a threat at the close of the petition, this, with the preceding one from Providence, met with a favorable reception. The vessels and goods of the citizens of this state were for a limited time placed on the same footing with like property of citizens of the United States. The earliest symptom of wavering or doubt on the part of the majority appeared at this session of the Assembly, and consisted of a request to the several towns to instruct their representatives as to the course they should pursue in relation to calling a convention. This course might have originated from an expectation of strengthening themselves, by showing a great majority of the people on their side, rather than from wavering or doubt. Providence, on this occasion, refused to give specific instructions to her representatives, but directed them to act conscientiously in the matter, and according to their oaths of office—instructions which neither they nor their opponents could have misunderstood.

In November 1789, North Carolina adopted the



constitution, and left Rhode-Island "alone in her glory ;" sovereign, independent, and alone—no state or nation bound to her by treaty, or by community of feeling, situation or interest.

The January session 1790, was holden at Providence. The motion for a convention was renewed by Benjamin Bourne, one of the representatives of Providence, and carried in the lower house by a handsome majority, on Friday. The Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and eight senators, composed the then Senate. Four senators voted to concur with the lower house, and the Lieutenant Governor and four senators against it, the vote being taken on Saturday evening. The Assembly adjourned to Sunday morning. Before the Assembly met, one of the senators who voted against the convention, left Providence before the hour of meeting arrived. It has been said in justification of this course of conduct, that he had that morning been convinced that he ought that day to attend to his pastoral duties as a minister, and that he left for that purpose. Fortunate was it for the friends of the constitution, that he was so. The question was soon taken in the Senate. The associates of the departed elder, each stood firm in his place and in his opinion, but his absence made it incumbent on the Governor, as the presiding officer, to untie the vote, which he did by voting to concur with the lower house. A remnant are living of those who thronged the state house that day, and thronged it was to overflowing. The several churches were almost vacated. The most intense anxiety pervaded the community, and when it



was known that the bill calling a convention had been passed into a law, vain was the attempt to stop the rising murmur of applause in the house, or the shouts of joy without it. They felt that there would be an end to their doubts and anxiety and fears, and that the true interests of the state would at last prevail. This was however but a short step toward the desired end. The views of a majority of the freemen were still against the constitution, and there existed no reasonable probability that the majority of the members of the convention would not be of the same opinion. The convention met at South Kingstown in March. Every member was at his post, and it was soon evident, that a majority of them opposed the constitution. The dangers which threatened the state seemed too great for them to reject it. Their policy was to postpone, hoping that something might transpire in the progress of the general government, which would afford new and tenable ground of opposition. The friends of the constitution urged its immediate adoption. Those opposed to it succeeded in procuring an adjournment of the convention to the last Monday in May, then to meet in Newport. The result of this vote shows, conclusively, that the convention could then have rejected the constitution, had it dared so to do. On the day appointed for the adjourned meeting of the convention, the freemen of Providence met in town-meeting, and gave the following instructions to their delegates :

Resolved, that, in case the convention of the state now convened in Newport, shall not, at the present session, adopt the constitution, but shall either reject the same or adjourn to some



future day, that in such case, the delegates from this town in said convention, be and they are hereby instructed to enter a solemn and spirited protest against such rejection or adjournment.

It is further resolved, that it is our opinion, that on the rejection of the said constitution or further delay of a decision thereon, the respective towns of the state have a right to make application to the Congress of the United States, for the same privileges and protection which are afforded to the towns under their jurisdiction; and in such case the delegates from this town, be and they are hereby fully authorized and empowered, to meet with the delegates from the town of Newport, and the delegates from such other towns as may think proper to join them, for the purpose of consulting and advising such mode of application, as they in their wisdom may think proper, and to carry the result of their deliberations into immediate effect; and that they make report of their doings to the next town meeting.

The committee who prepared these instructions, consisted of John Brown, Welcome Arnold, John Dorrance, Gershom Jones, Jeremiah Olney, George Benson, Zephaniah Andrews, Joseph Nightingale, and Daniel Cooke. The delegates had no occasion to use the extraordinary powers conferred on them. The right and power to give them, may well be questioned. Certainly, nothing but a most sure probability of utter destruction, or wilful disregard of consequences by the convention, could justify the use of them. The adjourned session commenced on Monday. The excitement among the inhabitants may be inferred, from the fact that their meetings, on and after Thursday, were holden in the second Baptist meeting house, the state house being too small to accommodate the spectators. On Saturday afternoon, the vote was put and carried in favor of the constitution, by a majority of two. Per-



haps it would not be well to inquire too particularly how that majority was obtained. There were some patriots in those days, who acted as though the end would, sometimes, justify the means.

The delegates from Providence to this convention, Jabez Bowen, Benjamin Bourne, William Barton and John Innes Clark, reached their home on Sunday morning. The news of the auspicious termination of their labors preceded them a few hours. Patriotism again encroached on piety, as when the vote for calling the convention passed in the preceding January, and the stillness of the Sabbath morning was broken by the joyful roar of artillery. The Tuesday following was devoted to the commemoration of the event. The military paraded, flags were hoisted, salutes were fired, the bells were rung, and all classes of the community joined in testifying their joy at an event in which all were deeply interested.

A desire to present, in an uninterrupted sketch, the proceedings of the town in relation to the paper money of 1786, and to the adoption of the Constitution of the United States, has necessarily led to the exclusion of other events happening at the same period.

In the beginning of January 1784, the streets and bridges sustained great damage by a sudden freshet in Moshassuck river. The rain fell in torrents on Monday and Tuesday, the fifth and sixth days of January. The weather being at the same time quite warm, the snow and ice were melted, so that the stream of the Moshassuck was higher than it ever had been within the knowledge of any of the oldest



inhabitants. The mill dam of the old grist mill, which stood near where the lowest stone lock of the Blackstone Canal now is, remained undisturbed ; by which means, the water overflowed the west bank of the stream, just above the dam, cutting itself out a new channel, carrying away the bridge and eight buildings in the vicinity. Among the buildings was a new brick dwelling house belonging to Elisha Brown, Jun. This stood just north of the bleachery on Charles-street, and the new channel passed through its foundation, so that all the materials of the cellar, as well as the house, were carried down stream into the cove. A large building, between the new and old channels, was left untouched, the inmates of which were removed with great difficulty. The inhabitants did not succeed in their attempts to cut away the old mill dam until Wednesday, nor were the waters turned into their old channel until the day following. According to tradition there was a similar freshet in the Moshassuck, about seventy years before this, in which the waters broke from their old bed in nearly the same manner. There was another freshet in February 1807, which will long be remembered by the citizens of Providence. It carried away the two bridges over the Seekonk, and Mill bridge and Smith's bridge, over the Moshassuck.

The deaths in the year 1784 were one hundred and forty-one, including twenty-six blacks. It is matter of regret that a bill of mortality was not regularly kept in the town. This is the first year in which I have been able to find even an account of



the deaths; though it is presumed many facts could be collected from diaries &c. in the hands of individuals. The number of freemen in 1787 was 460.

In the year 1785, the General Assembly conferred on the town the power of making "by-laws for the better regulating the said town." This power had been exercised from the first settlement without interruption. There must have existed some peculiar circumstance which induced the Assembly to make this grant at this time, but no such appears in the records.

In December 1787, the ship General Washington, Captain Jonathan Donison, sailed from the port of Providence for Canton. It has been stated that this was the first vessel which bore the flag of the United States into the Celestial Empire. This is a mistake. That honor belongs to a sloop from New-York. She was followed by a ship from Massachusetts. The General Washington was the first ship from this state. She completed her voyage in nineteen months and a few days. Providence at this time numbered many enterprising merchants among her citizens. Commerce was esteemed, if not the only, at least the most direct road to affluence.

The General Assembly erected a number of her citizens into a corporation, for the purpose of keeping the channel of the river open, and granted them the right to collect two cents per ton on every vessel over sixty tons burthen, entering the harbor, for the purpose of defraying the expenses. In a letter from this corporation to Congress, in 1790, praying a continuance of these privileges, they state, that



“there is a greater number of vessels belonging to this port than to New-York,” and that “it is a place of more navigation than any of its size in the union.” The president of the society, at this time, was Welcome Arnold, a gentleman who would not have hazarded his high character, by giving currency to a falsehood. An account was taken of the shipping of Providence in March 1790. It consisted of 9 ships, 36 brigs, 45 sloops and 20 schooners, being 110 sail in all, and of 10,590 tons burthen ; exclusive of river packets, boats and shallops.

In 1789, some individuals sought permission of the town to erect a tide grist mill at Weybosset Bridge. The proposition was rejected, and probably to the pecuniary advantage of the proposers. At that time, foreign vessels occasionally landed their cargoes north of the bridge. Vessels were built at the ship yard near the foot of court house parade, and at the north end of canal basin, on the south side of Smith-street, for a long time after this

In the same year, the representatives of Barrington, in pursuance of their instructions, moved the General Assembly to set apart a day for a public thanksgiving, which was done. The fact would not have been noted here, had it not been said, in connexion with it, that this was the first general thanksgiving ever appointed in the state. This is an error. There certainly was one appointed in 1759, and in other years. But since 1789, there has, it is believed, been no omission of such an appointment, except in 1801. The newspaper notes, as worthy of example, that John Brown, one of the most wealthy



merchants of Providence, or in fact of New England, appeared in January 1789, dressed in cloth made from the fleeces of his own flocks. The paper added that the yarn was spun by a woman eighty-eight years of age.

It is seldom one can meet with any pork statistics in New-England ; but in 1789, Knight Dexter took an account of the porkers raised in Providence, and slaughtered for omnivorous man. The number was four hundred and twenty-five, the weight, eighty-four thousand eight hundred and sixty-five pounds. In addition to these, he reported one thousand six hundred and thirty-nine, driven into town and killed. Another set of facts is stated in a newspaper of the same year, which should have induced the inhabitants to double their diligence in raising articles of food. A correspondent of the Providence Gazette, stated that the wife of Waterman Carpenter, at five successive births, had presented her husband with ten living children. The three with which she presented him at the sixth birth, were unfortunately dead.

The census of 1790, shows that the population of Providence had increased to 6,380 ; that of the state having also risen to 68,825.

In August, of this year, President Washington visited Providence. He came from New-York in the Packet Hancock, Capt. Brown, accompanied by his excellency Gov. Clinton, of New-York, the honorable Thomas Jefferson, Secretary of State, the honorable Theodore Foster, one of the Senators of the state, Judge Blair, Mr. Smith, of South Carolina,



and Mr. Gilman, of New-Hampshire, members of Congress. Agreeably to previous arrangements, a procession escorted the President and suite from the wharf to his lodging, at the Golden Ball Inn, now known as the Mansion House. A federal salute, accompanied by the joyful ringing of bells, announced his arrival. The college edifice was illuminated in the evening. The next morning, the President and suite, accompanied by his excellency Gov. Fenner, visited the several points of interest about the town. At three o'clock, about three hundred partook of an entertainment at the court house, after which he was escorted to Captain Brown's packet, in which he took his departure the same evening. The following address was presented to the President, by Henry Ward, Enos Hitchcock, Welcome Arnold, David Howell and Benjamin Bourne, a committee appointed to draw up and present the same.

"To the President of the United States.

Sir—The inhabitants of Providence beg leave to offer you their congratulations for your safe arrival at this place.

We are sensibly affected by the honor conferred on the state, and on us in particular, in the present visit; and be assured sir, we shall think ourselves peculiarly happy, if by our utmost attentions, it can be made agreeable to you.

We gladly seize the first opportunity, to express our most sincere satisfaction, in your election to the Presidency of the United States. The unbiassed voice of a great nation, which unanimously called you to that important trust, is an event, of which the annals of history afford no example, nor will future time see it followed, unless the most transcendent merit and the clearest fame, should be united in the same person. As general of the armies of the United States, and as their President, we are attached to you by every motive of gratitude and affection. To the conduct and management of her commander in chief, uni-



formly displayed in the course of a long and arduous war, America is indebted, and to the smiles of Heaven, for her freedom and independence; and the consummate prudence and ability manifested in the exercise of the power delegated to the President of the United States, exhibit to the world a character of no less celebrity in the cabinet than in the field.

From our most excellent constitution, and the benign influence of those virtues which characterize your administration, we entertain the most pleasing hopes of the extension of commerce, the encouragement of agriculture and manufactures, and of the establishment of public faith and private credit, and that the liberties of America will be transmitted to posterity.

We ardently pray, that a life so conducive to the welfare of millions, may be long protracted, and that when the fatal shaft shall be sped which shall deprive America of her great benefactor, you may ascend to those regions, where, only, exalted virtue will be fully rewarded.

Done in town meeting, legally assembled, this 17th day of August, 1790, and in the fifteenth year of independence.

Signed at the request of the town.

JABEZ BOWEN, Moderator.

DANIEL COOKE, Town Clerk."

To this Address, President Washington returned the following reply.

"To the inhabitants of Providence.

Gentlemen—The congratulations which you offer me upon my arrival at this place, are received with no small degree of pleasure. For your attentions and endeavors to render the town agreeable to me, and for your expressions of satisfaction at my election to the Presidency of the United States, I return you my warmest thanks. My sensibility is highly excited by your ardent declarations of attachment to my person and to the constitution.

As, under the smiles of Heaven, America is indebted for freedom and independence, rather to the joint exertions of the citizens of the several states, in which it may be your boast to have borne no inconsiderable share, than to the conduct of her commander in chief, so is she indebted for their support, rather



to a continuation of those exertions, than the prudence and ability manifested in the exercise of powers, delegated to the President of the United States.

Your hopes for the extension of commerce and the encouragement of agriculture and manufactures, and the establishment of public faith, as reared upon our constitution, are well founded; and it is my earnest wish, that you may extensively enjoy the benefits arising therefrom.

I thank you, gentlemen, for your prayers for my future welfare, and offer up my best wishes for your individual and collective happiness.

GEO. WASHINGTON."



## CHAPTER SIXTH.

### GENERAL HISTORY.

FROM 1790, TO THE ADOPTION OF THE CITY CHARTER.

The history of a town or other municipal corporation, in a time of peace and prosperity, is embraced in a few words. The events which go to make up that history, the facts which constitute that prosperity, are too minute for observation. A detail of them would be as useless and uninteresting as an enumeration of the several streamlets that feed and make up the resistless current of the father of rivers. We take occasion, therefore, to congratulate our readers, upon an approach to the close of this part of the annals of Providence.

In 1791, several of the wealthy merchants, moved by the great advantages which had resulted to Boston from the bank established there, called a public meeting of such persons as were inclined to favor the establishment of a similar institution in Providence. The meeting adopted a plan prepared for their examination, and the "Providence Bank" went into operation in October. This was the first institution of the kind incorporated in this state. Since its incorporation, the General Assembly have, in their wisdom, at various times, granted other charters, in other towns in the state, as well as Provi-



dence. In 1842, the whole number in the state was sixty-two, having a capital paid in amounting to \$10,159,999. The annexed table will show several particulars relative to the banks in Providence.

Names of Banks.	When incorporated.	Am't of capital up to May, 1842.	Am't of capital authorized by Charter.
American,	Oct. 1833.	\$314,000	\$500,000
Arcade,	June, 1831.	400,000	500,000
Blackstone Canal,	Jan. 1831.	434,650	500,000
Commercial,	Jan. 1833.	263,850	500,000
City Bank,	June, 1833.	200,000	500,000
Eagle,	Feb. 1818.	383,250	500,000
Exchange,	Feb. 1801.	500,000	500,000
Globe,	Jan. 1831.	400,000	500,000
High-Street,	June, 1828.	118,100	400,000
Manufacturers,	Oct. 1813.	408,800	500,000
Mechanics and }			
Manufacturers, }	June, 1827.	182,500	500,000
Mechanics,	June, 1823.	459,200	500,000
Merchants,	Feb. 1818.	500,000	500,000
National,	Oct. 1833.	120,000	500,000
North America,	Oct. 1823.	220,050	500,000
Phenix, formerly Far-			
mers and Mechanics, }	Jan. 1823.	168,450	300,000
Providence,	Oct. 1791.	500,000	500,000
Roger Williams,	Oct. 1803.	499,950	500,000
Traders,	June, 1836.	200,000	200,000
Union,	Oct. 1814.	500,000	500,000
Weybosset,	June, 1831.	300,000	500,000

In 1819, the Providence Institution for Savings, received a Charter of Incorporation from the General Assembly. In January 1842, the number of depositors was 2150, and the amount of deposits \$297,547. The good effects of this institution have been extensively felt in this community.

As exemplifying the means of communication with other parts of the United States, the arrangement of the mails at Providence, in 1791, John Carter being postmaster, is here inserted. The western and southern mails closed on Mondays and Thursdays,



and arrived on Tuesdays and Fridays. The eastern mails closed on Tuesdays and Fridays, and arrived on Mondays and Thursdays. The community then had little idea of railroad speed, and were compelled to put up with news from Boston, two days old. This year they had a military muster, the first in ten years. The inhabitants lost their relish for playing soldiers, after having been in the revolutionary war. In 1792, it became necessary to re-build Weybosset Bridge. The plan proposed, was a bridge fifty-six feet wide, with a draw, resting on wooden trussels, instead of the old stone pillars, which were to be removed. The estimated expense exceeded £900. The eastern abutment was to be removed westward and the channel narrowed about thirty feet, in order to make room for a street where South Water and Canal streets now are. Individuals began to feel an interest in opening more convenient modes of access into the town from the eastward, than were afforded by the ferries at narrow passage and Fuller's ferry over the Seekonk. Meetings were called, and estimates made, of the expense of a bridge over that river, where Washington Bridge now is. Unavailing were all the attempts to raise a fund sufficient to build and maintain a free bridge. A similar ineffectual attempt had been made in 1773. At June session of the General Assembly, grants were obtained for both the toll bridges over the Seekonk River. The first team passed Washington Bridge on the 12th April, 1793. The bridges were both carried away in the freshet of 1807.

In 1793, the town proposed providing a place for



town meetings, by raising the market-house, at an expense of £750. The design was however relinquished and the "Old Town-House" bought for that purpose the following year, of the Congregational Society. The town directed the town clerk to keep his office in the market-house chambers, and the town-council to hold their meetings there. The clergymen in Providence, published the following address this year, on a hand bill, and circulated it through the town. The good advice it contains, and its affectionate admonitions and exhortations, entitle it to a careful perusal by citizens of the town, at all times. It evinces a spirit in the clergy of those days, of piety toward God, of love toward their fellow men, and of union among themselves, honorable to them as christian teachers, and as individuals, and which should ensure them a grateful remembrance.

"A friendly address to the inhabitants of the town of Providence.

Friends, brethren and fellow citizens :

Impressed by a sense of duty and actuated by motives of charity to our fellow men, we, the clergy of this town, beg leave to arrest your attention, to a few things which concern your welfare. Deeply affected, at beholding the growth of impiety and immorality, we desire in a most affectionate and respectful manner, unitedly, to address you on the importance of taking some effectual measures to prevent their further progress. In this address we feel secure in the approbation of every liberal and candid mind. To be silent with these impressions, would be criminal. It would be to betray the trust reposed in us. In this joint attempt, we shall, at least, manifest our affection for you and your children, and show that our exertions have one common object in view, viz. your and their good.

Accept, then, this office of friendship. We wish no man any



ill. We are desirous of the good of all. Vice is a bane of society. Virtue is the source of order, of happiness among men. Give countenance to the latter. Frown upon the former. Does not profaneness, awfully abound? This loosens the bonds of government, by taking away the fear of GOD, that powerful principle of order. Intemperance, which debases the man, entails poverty and wretchedness on families and casts many burdens on the public. The many and great violations of the law of the Sabbath, open the way to licentiousness and profligacy of manners. To invite your attention to these enormities, to entreat your exertions to check, to frown them out of countenance, is the object of our address. In this you are not called upon to espouse the schemes of a party. You are most earnestly entreated to attend to that which is especially connected with the well being of society. It is the cause of human happiness.—Yes, Friends and Brethren, the cause we plead with you is the cause of virtue, against the strong prevalence of vice and iniquity, which marks the character of our times. It is the cause of man. It is the cause of GOD. Society, in general, your families, in particular, and yourselves individually, are interested in it. To the vicious, immoral and irreligious, of every class, we offer our most affectionate admonition. We commend to their serious consideration, the importance of amendment.

But in vain do we speak, unless parents, magistrates, men of influence, will second our advice. These form the manners of a people and give a stamp to public opinion. In vain do we intreat and persuade, while these who give a tone to public character, do not co-operate with us. How many throw the weight of their influence in the opposite scale? Remember, sirs, your responsibility at the tribunal of the public, at the bar of GOD. In proportion to power and influence, are your obligations to extend the weight of your example. Where much of this power is given, much will be required. Example speaks louder than words. Example extends its influence further than instruction. Encourage our hearts. Strengthen our hands. Let your influence favor the cause of virtue.

Two things are immediately within your reach. These are a greater care of the education of children and the rising genera-



tion, and a more orderly and regular observation of the Sabbath. Your honor, as a town, requires attention to the latter, the credit and comfort of your families, to the former. The laws of God and of the government require a greater attention to both. Your children are dear to you. They will be your glory, or your reproach and pain. Their passions early spring up and show themselves. They need to be soon checked and controlled. Their minds need much instruction and cultivation, to prevent the growth of evil principles. Their manners require the constant watch of parents. They profane their Maker's name, most awfully, in the streets. Let them be admonished of the danger of such wickedness. Let them know the worth and amiableness of good manners, of good language. Let them be "trained up in the way they should go," and they will be your ornament and crown of glory.

This cannot be done, but with great difficulty, without the regular observation of the Sabbath. This is the greatest barrier against vice, the best method to introduce order and decorum, among all classes of people, old and young. It affords the best means of education. The appointment of one day in seven as a day of rest, the consecrating the seventh part of time to religious purposes and for the improvement of the human mind, was an appointment, worthy of him who made it, and is most suitable for man. To spend this day in a way most agreeable to the original design of it, is the directest way to improve in those things, that are useful, most excellent and praiseworthy. It polishes and refines the manners. It excites to acts of benevolence and kindness. It strongly tends to promote the great ends of society. To pass over the many advantages it affords the pious and the devout, to exercise their minds in a religious manner, it gives parents and house-holders, a favorable opportunity to instruct their children and families. By teaching them to spend one day in seven, with that decency and propriety, which ought always to distinguish the Sabbath from the other days of the week, the government of them is rendered more easy. It tends to preserve them from the snares of vice and to impress on their minds a reverence for God and his institutions, a regard for virtue and religion. Under the influence of such a steady practice, they would be ripening in those useful and amiable quali-



ties which will enable them to act their part well on the stage of life and to become good members of society. The present degeneracy of morals, the very great relaxation of virtuous sentiments and principles, appear in no circumstance so much as by the great contempt cast upon the institutions of religion, by the manner in which the law of the Sabbath is violated and profaned. To disregard whatever has an air of principled devotion, to neglect those plain duties which are necessary for the support of religion, must be productive of most pernicious consequences. Such examples produce effects dangerous to society. Their effects cease not with the present generation. They make an early impression on the minds of youth and have a most corrupting tendency on the rising generation. They vitiate the morals of your children and entail the wretched inheritance of depraved manners, with its long train of dreadful consequences, upon posterity.

How great the call for this address, how great the necessity of taking speedy measures for the redress of these evils, is submitted to your most serious consideration.

That our attempt may be crowned with success, and your own and your children's good may be promoted hereby, and a divine effusion of His richest blessings be showered down upon you and them, by the Supreme Ruler of the world, is the ardent wish and fervent prayer of your affectionate friends.

JOSEPH SNOW,  
ENOS HITCHCOCK,  
STEPHEN GANO,  
ABRAHAM L. CLARKE,  
JONATHAN MAXCY,  
JAMES WILSON.

Providence Dec. 19, 1794."

In 1795, the General Assembly directed a new estimate of taxable property to be made, as the basis of future taxation. The committee for Providence consisted of William Larned, William Richmond, Thomas L. Halsey, Thomas Arnold, and Thomas P. Ives. The general committee consisted of John L.



Boss, John Davis, Moses Brown, Noah Mathewson, Joseph Stanton, jr., Elisha R. Potter, Ichabod Cole, Thomas Allen, William Green and Isaac Johnson. It was the duty of the town committee to call on the inhabitants for exact lists of all their rateable property, and from these and all other sources to make an estimate of the rateable estate in the town. The state's committee visited each town, and upon examination of the estimate made by the town committee, and comparing it with all other evidence given them, varied or established it, as the circumstances of each town seemed to require. This committee reported at the June session, 1796, but their report was not signed by either of the committee from the county of Providence, and by only one from the county of Bristol. The valuation of the state was fixed at \$15,500,000, and that of Providence, at \$2,950,000. The adoption of the report was vigorously opposed by a respectable minority in the General Assembly. Fifteen members of the House of Representatives, from various towns in the counties of Providence, Newport and Bristol, presented a protest against its adoption. The Assembly immediately ordered a state tax to be apportioned according to the estimate. The subject was brought before a town meeting in Providence, on the 25th of June. They resolved that the apportionment was unjust and unconstitutional, and directed their assessors not to assess the town's proportion of it. They also appointed a committee to draft a circular to the other towns in the state, which felt themselves aggrieved by the estimate, inviting them to meet in convention, to devise



measures for its revision, and also, to take into consideration the expediency of forming a written state constitution. On the day appointed, delegates from eight towns in Providence and Bristol counties, met at Providence, and organized themselves by the choice of Daniel Mowry for chairman, and James Burrill, jr. for secretary. The convention subsequently adjourned to the 15th of August, when they agreed upon two circulars to the different towns in the state, one in relation to the estimate, and the other in relation to a state constitution. In the first it is asserted that the state estimate was based upon "conjectural calculations and selfish views," and partial and unjust to several towns. They express their belief that if the General Assembly can be induced to revise it, these errors would be pointed out, and would be removed and tranquillity restored; and they close by announcing their determination, to acquiesce in the decision of the Assembly, whatever it might be. In the second circular they urge the necessity of establishing a firmer government in the state, upon a written constitution. The town of Providence followed up these proceedings of the convention, by corresponding instructions to their representatives. Those in relation to a state constitution were postponed to a succeeding session of the Assembly, and the other towns requested in the mean time to instruct their representatives on the subject. As the state records are silent in relation to further proceedings on this, and in relation to all proceedings on the other subject, it is presumed the town was unsuccessful in both. In September the town



repealed the vote refusing to assess the state tax. Upon comparing this estimate with that adopted by the Assembly in 1782, one cannot but be struck with the great changes that had taken place in property, or in opinions in relation to property. The estimate of the state was then footed at £2,990,486, and that of Providence, at £217,000. Compared with the estimate of 1824, the change is no less great. The state was then valued at \$32,640,000, and Providence at \$9,500,000, being considerably more than half the valuation of the state in 1796, and nearly the valuation of the whole state in 1782.

In February 1796, the General Assembly incorporated a company to build a navigable canal from tide water in Providence, to the north line in the state. The company proposed to continue that canal in Massachusetts, through Worcester to Connecticut river, and applied to the legislature of Massachusetts, for a charter for that purpose. This was refused, and of course put an end to the whole project. The project originated with John Brown, an eminent merchant of Providence, who was so sanguine of the successful operation of such a canal, that he subscribed \$40,000 toward the stock. Notwithstanding the great advantages which it was believed both Providence and the county of Worcester would derive from a work of this kind, no further attempt was made to accomplish it, until 1823. In January of that year, the legislature of Massachusetts incorporated a company for that purpose ; and in June, that of Rhode Island incorporated a similar company, both of which were united in interest, by



the legislatures, on their petition. Subscriptions for the stock were soon filled. The company of subscribers organized themselves in May, 1825, chose Edward Carrington, Stephen H. Smith and Moses B. Ives, for their commissioners, under whose auspices the work was commenced, with every prospect of success, and completed with all reasonable despatch. The summit level at Worcester, is 450 feet above tide water in Providence. This is overcome by forty-nine locks, forty-eight of which are of hewn stone, costing about \$4,000 each. The length of the canal is forty-four miles and three quarters; its depth, four feet; its width at the bottom, twenty feet; and at the surface, forty-five feet. The estimated cost of the work was \$500,000; the actual cost exceeded the estimate about \$250,000. It was opened for use, on the first day of July, 1828, when the packet boat *Lady Carrington* passed over the whole line in one day, and returned the next. The hopes of the stockholders, of deriving a pecuniary advantage from this work, have been cruelly disappointed. The investment has been a total loss to them. The canal being erected along the valley of the Blackstone river, whose banks are lined with manufacturing establishments fully equal, at least, to the power of the river, has occasioned much misunderstanding and difficulty between the stockholders and mill owners.

In 1797, the yellow fever made its appearance for the first time in Providence, with such violence as to cause it to be noticed in the journals of the day. It commenced its ravages in August, and in



that and in the succeeding month, thirty-six persons fell victims to it. It was confined principally to a small part of the south end of the town. The next year, the citizens were called to sympathise with the inhabitants of Philadelphia, who were suffering under great ravages of the same disease. Their sensibilities were so aroused, by the recollection of their dangers the year before, that they generously contributed nearly fifteen hundred dollars, for the relief of the poor and destitute in that devoted city. In 1800, Providence was again visited with that scourge of the human race, and their poor then found that sympathy which had been excited toward Philadelphia, exercised in their behalf by the citizens of Philadelphia, and the sum of \$2,000 remitted for their relief. It commenced this year in the same neighborhood as in 1797, but was not equally severe.

President Adams, with his family, passed through Providence, in August 1797. This was the first opportunity the citizens had had to pay their respects to him, after his election to the presidency of the United States. He was escorted into town by the Providence Light Dragoons, a company which had been formed about five years, and welcomed by the ringing of bells and firing of cannon. The following address was presented to him on his arrival.

“The citizens of the town of Providence, voluntarily assembled to tender their respects to the chief magistrate of the nation, on his arrival in this town, beg leave to approach you, by their committee, with sentiments of joy on the present occasion, and with assurances of the sensible pleasure they feel, in common with their fellow-citizens, that the suffrages of this great community have met in a person whose long tried virtues and



talents pre-eminently qualify him to succeed the illustrious Washington. With the highest satisfaction they have observed, in the measures of your administration, indubitable proofs of republican firmness and political wisdom, which dignify the nation and endear its government to the people. We have to add their ardent wishes that your journey may be prosperous, your life a continued blessing to the world, and as happy to yourself as useful to the nation. We are, in behalf of the town, very respectfully,

Your most obedient servants,

ENOS HITCHCOCK, }  
 BENJAMIN BOURNE, } Committee."  
 JAMES BURRILL, Jr. }

To this he returned the following reply :

"Gentlemen,—The civilities of the inhabitants of the town of Providence, to me and my family, are the more flattering, as they were unexpected ; and I beg leave to communicate to them through their committee, my hearty thanks.

The satisfaction they express on my advancement in the government, affords me much consolation ; and their approbation of my conduct in the discharge of the duties of my station, is, as far as depends upon them, the completion of my wishes from my fellow citizens. In return for their kind wishes, I pray them to be assured of mine for the prosperity and happiness of the citizens of Providence, individually and collectively.

JOHN ADAMS."

In the evening the college edifice and some private dwellings were brilliantly illuminated. The next morning he proceeded on his journey, escorted to the line of Massachusetts by several of the independent companies, and many citizens.

The following address from citizens of Providence to President Adams, in 1798, is inserted as expressive of the views of the citizens on that great question which was then agitating, not only America, but Europe.



“To the President of the United States.

Sir,—The underwritten inhabitants of the town of Providence, voluntarily assembled in pursuance of public notice, beg leave to address you, with sentiments of personal and profound respect.

The late disclosure of the views and designs of France, in contrast with the pacific dispositions of the United States, has excited the most disquieting apprehensions of hostilities from that republic, and the most unlimited confidence in the wisdom, integrity and patriotism of the administration of our government. In the progress of the negociation with that republic, whose legitimate origin we were the first to acknowledge—a republic, which at the dawn of its political day, seemed elevated to the sublimest height of virtue, and disclaimed, in the first exercise of its power, all right to interfere in the internal concerns of other nations—we observe, with regret a departure from the great principles of liberty and justice; and we observe this, with the deeper regret, because that country received its first lessons in liberty from ours. After the numberless and trying proofs, which the United States had given of their sincere desire to preserve an impartial neutrality, their repeated applications for redress, might, at least have been answered with professions of amity and of a love of justice, instead of an avowed intention, still further to impoverish us and pursue a studied system of universal domination.

While we lament that some of the inhabitants of this country have too much attached themselves to European politics, we believe this dangerous mistake proceeded, not from a treacherous defection from the cause of their country, but from the fascination of the brilliant spectacle of a nation victoriously contending for its liberties. We rejoice that the scales are fallen from their eyes; they must now see, what enlightened statesmen have seen before, that the sacred name of liberty is profaned, to disguise projects of ambition and conquest. Your late communications must cement the public councils, and increase the energy of government. The inadmissible and exorbitant demands of France, will not only deprive them of every American advocate, but convince the world, that an adjustment of the differences between the two countries was impracticable on any other basis than the prostration of America at the feet of France. The re-



sult in the mind of every American, must be a manly determination to vindicate the honor and interest of his country. Should we be driven to the last appeal, we have an extensive country, full of resources : and we trust in God, who has so signally favored us, that he will again inspire us with that glowing zeal and undismayed courage which, in a period not remote, this people so successfully displayed ; and in such an exigency we derive additional confidence from the firm moderation, the long tried integrity, the ripened wisdom, which induced an enlightened nation to place you at the helm of government.

We cannot conclude, without assuring you of our entire approbation of your conduct, in relation to the foreign concerns of this country, of our prayers for your personal health and happiness, and of our readiness, with our lives and fortunes, to support the dignity and independence of the United States."

This address was signed by nearly one thousand citizens. The reply to it was as follows:—

"To the inhabitants of the town of Providence, in the State of Rhode Island :

Gentlemen,—This respectful address, from the inhabitants of Providence, who have been my friends and neighbors from my youth, was by no means necessary to convince me of their affectionate attachment.

Imagination can scarcely conceive a stronger contrast than has lately been disclosed between the views of France and those of the United States. I will not distinguish between the views of the governments and those of the nations. If in France they are different, the nation, whose right it is, will soon show that they are so. If in America they are the same, this fact also will be shown by the nation, in a short time, in a strong light. I cannot, however, deem this contrast a sufficient cause of disquieting apprehensions of hostilities from that republic : hostilities have already come thick upon us, by surprise, from that quarter ; if others are coming, we shall be better prepared to meet and repel them. When we were the first to acknowledge the legitimate origin of the French republic, we discovered at least as much real sincerity and honesty of heart, as we



did of knowledge of the subject, or foresight of its consequences. The ill success of those proofs which the United States have given of their sincere desire to preserve an impartial neutrality, and of their repeated negotiations for redress of wrongs, have demonstrated, that other means must be resorted to, in order to obtain it. I agree entirely with you in acquitting, in general, those of our citizens who have too much attached themselves to European politics, of any treacherous defection from the cause of their country. The French revolution was a spectacle so novel, and the cause was so complicated, that I have ever acknowledged myself incompetent to judge of it, as it concerned the happiness of France, for operated on that of mankind. My countrymen in general were, I believe, as ill qualified as myself to decide. The French nation alone had the right and the capacity, and to them it should have been resigned. We should have suspended our judgments, and been as neutral and impartial between the parties in France, as between the nations of Europe. The honor of our nation is now universally seen to be at stake, and its independence in question, and all America appears to declare, with one heart and one voice, a manly determination to vindicate both.

The legislature, by the late publication of instructions and despatches, have appealed to the world; and if the iron hand of power has not locked up the presses of Europe, in such a manner that the facts cannot be communicated to mankind, the impartial sense and voice of human nature must be in our favor. If perseverance in injustice should necessitate the last appeal, whatever causes we may have to humble ourselves before the Supreme Tribunal, we have none for any other sentiment than the pride of virtue and honest indignation against the late conduct of France toward us. I thank you, gentlemen, for your personal civilities to me, and return your kind wishes for my happiness.

Your noble declaration of your readiness, with your lives and fortunes, to support the dignity and independence of the United States, will receive the applause of your country, and of all others who have the feelings and sentiments of men.

April 30, 1793.

JOHN ADAMS."



The news of the death of Washington clothed the citizens of Providence with sadness. Upon its arrival, measures were adopted, by the military companies, for the celebration of his funeral solemnities. They appointed a committee to make the necessary arrangements, and the freemen, in town meeting, soon after elected the same persons, to wit. Nathan Fisher, Henry Smith, Robert Taylor and Amos M. Atwell, with the addition of Jeremiah Olney, John Whipple, Christopher Olney, Charles Lippitt and Jeremiah F. Jenkins. The 7th of January 1800, was appointed for the celebration. A national salute was fired in the morning in quick succession, and after that, a cannon every half hour, and minute guns during the moving of the procession. The muffled bells were tolled during the whole day, and until 9 o'clock in the evening. A procession was formed in Broad street, composed of civil and military officers, most of the incorporated societies in the town, and the masonic brethren, escorted by the Light Dragoons, the Independent Volunteers and the United Train of Artillery. From Broad street the procession moved to the house of Jeremiah Olney, where they received the bier. Jeremiah Olney, William Allen, Christopher Olney, Ebenezer Macomber, John Spurr and John S. Dexter officiated as pall bearers. They then proceeded to the Baptist meeting house, where George R. Burrill delivered an elegant funeral oration, which was afterwards published. After the ceremonies here the procession moved to St. John's church. Rev. Abraham L. Clark delivered a short address, while



the bier was set down, after which it was deposited under the church.

The Baptist meeting house was dressed with black on the occasion. On the preceding Sabbath most of the churches in the town exhibited the same signs of mourning. Great as was the parade on this occasion, it by no means equalled the grief it was intended to express. Had Washington lived but a few ages earlier, he would have been deified at his death, if not worshipped while living. A nation's tears bedewed his new made grave; when shall a nation's gratitude build him a monument?

On the 21st of January 1801, the town was visited with fire. The alarm was given about ten o'clock in the forenoon. The fire commenced in the loft of John Corlis' large brick store, situated on the west side of South Main street, nearly opposite the foot of Planet street. It extended along both sides of South Main street, between No. 101 and No. 143, and was finally, about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, stopped by blowing up and pulling down several buildings to the leeward of it. It destroyed thirty-seven buildings, consisting of 16 dwelling houses, 10 stores and 11 out-buildings, valued at \$300,000. The weather was excessively cold, and the wind high. A larger amount of property then fell a sacrifice to the fiery element than at any time previous, and it is familiarly spoken of, down to the present day, as "the great fire." Long may it retain undisputed title to this appellation.

In 1804, sundry citizens petitioned the town for a market house, to be established in Broad street.



This gave rise to much discussion. It was, subsequently, after having been referred to a committee, rejected by the town. It seemed then to be desirable to have but one public market house, it being supposed, that the competition which would be excited, by having more than one, would be injurious to the citizens, both by diminishing their income from the rents of the old market, and by increasing the prices of country produce, then almost universally sold at the market house by the producer.

Some of the same feeling existed in 1826, when a company applied to the General Assembly for a charter of incorporation with leave to erect a market house, at the junction of Mill and North Main streets; but it was finally granted in June of that year. The company proceeded at once, to erect the necessary building. It is of brick, three stories high above the basement. The basement is occupied by stores, the main floor, by a market and store, the story above, by the Mechanics' and Manufacturers' Bank, and in the third, is a large hall, occasionally used for public meetings. The cost of the whole was about \$8,000. In 1827, a number of persons combined to erect another market house at the junction of Pawtuxet and Broad streets. They obtained the requisite authority, both from the state and town, to carry their design into effect. This building is two stories high, measuring seventy feet by forty on the ground. The lower story is appropriated for a market.

The evils which it was feared would result from the erection of more than one market, were either



visionary when suggested, or the increase of the town in population, business and wealth, has more than neutralized them.

An attempt was made, in 1806, to have a bill of mortality kept, but without success. Dr. John Mackie, then a physician in full practice, kept bills of mortality for the years 1810 and 1811, which were published in the Rhode-Island American. The results were as follows :

Deaths from December 31, 1809, to December 31, 1810—men 40, women 53, children 43, total, 136. Births during the same period, 334. In 1811, the deaths were, of males 91, females 87, total 178. Births—of males 191, females 204, total 395. These returns are not so satisfactory as though derived from returns required by law, yet there is little doubt they are, in the main, correct.

In the great national questions which divided the American people, in relation to the embargo, the non-intercourse, and the subsequent war with Great Britain, the citizens of Providence uniformly sided against the executive of the United States. Their opposition to those measures never extended beyond petitions, resolutions and remonstrances. The news of the declaration of war reached here on the 24th of July 1812. It was received not only as a great national calamity, as war always is, but as peculiarly calculated to excite sorrow and regret. The bells were tolled, and the flags floated at half mast. On the 7th of August, the freemen assembled in town meeting, and unanimously passed the following resolutions :



Resolved, That it is the duty of every citizen promptly to aid in repelling all invasions of enemies, made for the purposes either of plunder, bloodshed, or devastation, or with any view to infract the rights, usurp the privileges, or interrupt the political freedom of any person whatever.

Resolved, that we consider it most indispensably needful, at this time, to give all aid for suppressing all riots, tumults and mobs, believing that however horrible war may be, between nation and nation, his terrible features almost soften with mercy, when compared with the grim and bloody visage of civil commotion.

Resolved, that we will, at the hazard of all things, aid in the support and complete execution of the laws, knowing that safety cannot be found, when law is trampled under foot, and believing that neither life, liberty or property can be secure, when once secret threats or open force have with impunity violated the freedom of speech, of the press, and of election.

Resolved, that we do all pledge ourselves, promptly, and on all occasions, to resist, and if possible, repel, all hostile invasions from the enemy, that we will assist in quelling riots, tumults and mobs, and do all in our power to discourage and discountenance every thing tending to those direful conflicts, hereby guaranteeing to all persons, so far as our influence and the effect of our exertions can extend, the perfect protection of the laws, so that they may, at all times, in all places, and on all occasions, freely speak and publish their opinions, and nominate and elect their public officers, nor be amenable therefor to any man or collection of men, nor to any tribunal on earth but such only as are established by the laws of the land.

Resolved, that for obtaining the objects aforesaid, we do commend to all persons, capable of bearing arms, forthwith to furnish themselves with arms and ammunition, and be ready at a moment's warning, to aid in defence of themselves, their families and their country.

These embody their creed. In 1814, when there was reason to fear that the enemy might visit the town, a meeting of citizens was called, and a committee, appointed to superintend the erection of for-



tifications and breastworks, for the defence of the town. The citizens turned out, *en masse*, at the call of this committee, and engaged personally, without respect to age, standing, property or profession, in erecting these works. They forgot their differences in opinion, about the causes or justice of the war; their only strife was, who should manifest the most works of patriotism. Their fellow citizens from the neighboring towns volunteered their services, and who will forget the spirit stirring songs, showing their union in heart and hand to defend the soil of the state from the invading foe. They caught the feeling and the words of their brethren at the south and west, and prolonged, as in echo, the chorus, while at their labors—

“ Better not invade,  
Yankees have the marrow.”

Nevertheless, they welcomed the return of peace with every demonstration of joy. The news reached here on the 12th day of February, 1815. The bells and cannon proclaimed the tidings, and it is amusing now to recall to mind the crowds that at that inauspicious season of the year, were patrolling the streets, hurrying from place to place, with no definite object in view. The 13th was thus spent, in going from place to place, and from house to house, merely repeating to each other what all had learned the day previous. In the evening, a general illumination of the town took place. Gradually the people regained their former sobriety of manners and movements, and returned to their wonted occupations.



On the 22d and 23d days of September, 1815, the town was visited with one of the most destructive and terrific storms on record. In 1818, the town appointed Moses Brown, Tristram Burgess, Samuel Eddy, George Jackson, and John Howland, a committee to draw up a historical and topographical description of this storm. They never reported. One of the committee, Mr. Brown, drew up a statement in relation to it, a copy of which is now lodged in the Cabinet of the Rhode-Island Historical Society. The following extracts are made from that statement :

“ The storm of rain commenced on the 22d, from the N. E. ; moderate through the day, but at night the wind increased. On the morning of the 23d, the wind blew with increased severity from the east, and about 9 A. M. veered to E. S. E., at 10 or before, to S. E., and from this time to half past 11, the storm was tremendous, and beyond, far beyond, any in the memory of any man living. Before 12, the wind veered to S. W. and greatly abated.” “ The ebb tide, commencing near an hour before the regular time of high water, relieved the minds of our inhabitants from their apprehension of a more overwhelming calamity.” “ The damage by the extreme violence of the wind, extended to driving from their anchors and fastenings all the vessels, save two or three, that lay in the harbor and at the wharves ; some against the bridge with such force as to open a free passage for others to follow to the northern extremity of the cove above the bridge, to the number of between thirty and forty, of various descrip-



tions from five hundred tons, downwards." "Other ships and smaller vessels were lodged below the place of the bridge, on each side of the river, on the wharves. Scarcely a store that stood below Weybosset bridge, on both sides the river, round the harbor to India bridge, but what was damaged or entirely broken to pieces. Many houses and barns were blown down by the excessive violence of the wind, and many others removed or broken by the height of the tide and violence of the waves ; by which India Point bridge and the east and lower end of central bridge, were carried off, and by their joint influence the Second Baptist meeting-house on the west side of the river was destroyed from its foundation." "The wind alone blew down, unroofed and damaged many houses that stood out of the reach of the water." "A number of persons were wounded, and two lost their lives, David Butler and Reuben Winslow." "A sloop of about sixty tons floated across Weybosset-street and lodged in Pleasant-street, her mast standing above and she by the side of a three story brick house." "The amount of damage in this town has never been ascertained, but was estimated to be near a million of dollars." "The violence of the wind was such as to take up the spray of the sea water and wait it through the air to that degree as to appear on glass windows, salt to the taste, forty miles in the country, even to Worcester." "On measuring the height of the tide from a well known mark of the highest tide ever before known by our oldest people, this tide of 1815, appeared to be seven feet and five inches higher than any before known



by them." It must continue to be matter of deep regret that this committee had not been appointed earlier. They might then have collected many particulars not now included in this statement, and even at the time of their appointment, it is probable, more facts would have been gleaned up, if the committee had been composed of any one of the several gentlemen appointed on it.

The escape of one individual was almost miraculous. In the early part of the forenoon of the 23d, William Aplin went on board a vessel in which he was interested, then lying at a wharf in the southerly part of the town, to render her situation more secure, by getting other fasts from her to the wharf. He succeeded in this, and with such effect, that, in a short time, she raised the wharf, which was of wood, and together with parts of it was on her way up the river, to the cove. Mr. Aplin was not aware of any danger, till his vessel was in the middle of the stream. The wind carried her over to the west side of the river, and against a schooner which lay there moored. Here he endeavored to reach the shore, and jumped on board the schooner, and from her toward a pile of bricks on the wharf. A sudden movement of the vessel prevented his reaching the bricks, and he fell short, even, of the wharf, and into the stream. Though a very athletic man, and an expert swimmer, in vain were his attempts to stem the current. He yielded to dire necessity, and amidst the ruins of buildings and wharves, contents of stores and lumber yards, he pursued his course up stream, sometimes astride a stick of timber, and at other times div-



ing beneath the floating mass to avoid danger. In his course, with unsurpassed presence of mind, he took off his hat, coat, vest and boots. He commenced taking off his pantaloons, but finally replaced them. He landed near where the state prison is now located, so chilled with his exposure, and so severely bruised and injured, as to be unable for some time to move.

It is not possible for any but an eye witness to have a full conception of the dangers Mr. Aplin escaped.

“The great storm” is still referred to as a memorable event. Individuals suffered great damage from it, almost every wharf being swept of its stores. This circumstance opened the way however, for new and commodious streets and new and more elegant stores. South Water-street and South West Water-street, date their origin after this—Canal-street was opened soon after. The same event removed some of the ancient boundaries of the cove. The inhabitants were always alive to the preservation of this sheet of water, which adds so much to the health and beauty of the town. They appointed a committee to establish anew the dividing line between the public, and the proprietors of the adjoining lands, and to render further aggression on the part of individuals impossible, a street was laid out around its borders. Circumstances have delayed the completion of this street even to the present time. It is still however looked forward to as a measure highly advantageous to the public. That part of it which was parallel to Market and Westminster-streets was soon finish-



ed, for individuals saw their pecuniary interests involved in its completion. That required the erection of a new bridge across the river near Weybosset. This was completed in 1828. It was built by the Providence Washington Insurance Company. At the same time another bridge adjoining the estate of that company connecting the new bridge with the old Weybosset bridge was built by them. Weybosset bridge was rebuilt about the same time, and considerable addition made to its width. The present (1843) bridge was erected in 1839, at a cost exceeding \$25,000. It has now grown to the enormous width of one hundred and forty feet, yet probably not more exceeding the wants of the present city than did one of the earliest eighteen feet bridges the wants of the town as it then was.

In the summer of 1817, President Munroe, made his tour of the Eastern States. In expectation of his arrival at Providence, the citizens appointed a committee consisting of the town council, Richard Jackson, jr. Thomas P. Ives, James Burrill, jr. James Fenner, Edward Carrington, Samuel G. Arnold, Jeremiah B. Howell, Caleb Earle, William Church and John Carlile, to make the arrangements "which will best evince the high respect we have for the person and character of the chief magistrate of the United States." He arrived here on Monday, June 30, in the steamer *Firefly*. The ringing of the bells and firing of cannon proclaimed the unfeigned joy of the citizens of Providence. at his arrival among them, and in the evening a partial illumination repeated the welcome. He was escorted to the Golden



Ball Inn by several independent military companies. The next morning, he rode through the principal streets, of the town on horseback and left, about eleven o'clock, escorted by the Providence Light Dragoons.

The committee of arrangements presented him the following address on his arrival.

"SIR—The citizens of Providence beg leave to offer to you their sincere and cordial congratulations, upon your arrival in this town. With the most sensible pleasure they again see among them the first magistrate of the union, under a constitution, the adoption of which they so earnestly desired, to which they are so devotedly attached, and from the operation of which they have derived so many advantages; and have the honor of presenting their respectful address to you within their own municipal jurisdiction, as they have before had the satisfaction of doing to two of your illustrious predecessors.

The time and circumstances of your visit to this part of the United States, are such as to excite, in every mind, the most gratifying and patriotic sentiments. A great and free people, in the full enjoyment of peace and good government, unanimously bestowing upon their chief magistrate, in his progress through the country, the unsought and spontaneous expressions of their good will and confidence, offers unequivocal evidence of general happiness and freedom, and is a spectacle which no country in the world, except our own, can now exhibit.

The history of the United States affords the most consoling assurances, that the attachment of the people to the principles of liberty and to the blessings of a tranquil and well ordered government, founded upon the will and choice of the majority, arises upon the rational conviction and experience, and rests upon the solid foundation, of early and general education, and moral habits. The proofs which you every where receive of the respect and confidence of the people, and of their reverence for our republican institutions, must be to your own mind, a source of the highest satisfaction, and a rich reward for all your arduous labors in the public service. May you long continue to receive



these rewards, so grateful to your heart, and so honorable to your character, and to witness the increasing prosperity of the republic to whose service, in the field and in the cabinet, both your youth and your mature age, have been so faithfully and so successfully devoted. We have the honor to be with the highest respect, in behalf of the citizens of the town of Providence, your most obedient, and very humble servants."

The President's answer was as follows.

"Gentlemen—I receive with great satisfaction, the address which the citizens of Providence, through their committee, have been pleased to communicate to me. The pleasure of my journey has been greatly enhanced by the uniform kindness and promptitude, with which the objects of my visit have been seconded by my fellow citizens. Every where in the country, the reflecting mind cannot fail to observe the blessings of a free government. Living under a constitution, which secures equal civil, religious and political rights to all, it is a great consolation in administering it, that the people have formed so just an estimate of its value, and from rational conviction and not from blind prejudices, are sincerely devoted to its preservation.

I hope that this just confidence in the stability of our government may continue to increase, and if it does, it cannot fail to produce the happiest effects, by encouraging a love of our country, and an honest zeal to promote its best and permanent interests. Happy shall I be, if my exertions in the public service shall be so far successful, that they may assist the industry and enterprise of my fellow citizens in increasing the general prosperity.

JAMES MONROE.

To the Committee of the town of Providence."

Many advantages result both to rulers and people, from such a tour as President Munroe's. They destroy the unfounded prejudices which each entertain toward the other, they ameliorate the asperity of party feelings among the inhabitants of the visited cities, and they draw more closely the cords of union which unite the several sections of our common country. Every visit of any individual produces



this effect in a small degree ; but the advantages resulting from a visit of the head of the nation, cannot be fully appreciated.

The census of 1820, shewed a wholesome increase in the population and growth of Providence. The number of inhabitants on the east side of the river, was 6627, including 705 colored persons, and on the west, 5118, including 270 colored persons ; making a total of 11,745. To those accustomed, at the present time, to see such a number of foreigners about the streets of Providence, it will scarcely be believed, that in 1820, there were but nine foreigners not naturalized, on the west side of the river, and thirty on the east ; but the census shows this to be true. The rapid increase of the town may be fairly inferred, from the increase of supplies of fruit and vegetables brought to market within a few years before this period. On the 5th of September, 1820, a writer in the Providence Gazette, states that he counted one hundred and seven wagons of fruits and vegetables at market ; and that only six years before, the presence of forty-nine such wagons at market, was matter of surprise and remark. Before this, it was not uncommon to meet persons in the evening, wending their way through the streets, over the uneven sidewalks, making sure their steps by the flickering light of hand lanterns. This year, public lamps were erected at the expense of the city, and in 1821, the side-walk commissioners commenced their herculean labors of making the rough places smooth and the crooked straight, in the foot-ways through the town. In



1820, a fire hook and ladder company was established, and in 1822 a hydraulon purchased to protect the inhabitants against the ravages of fire. These several circumstances are brought together, as evidencing the advance of the town in prosperity and wealth as well as in population.

In 1824, the General Assembly called the attention of the freemen to the necessity and expediency of establishing a written constitution for the state. The freemen of Providence responded to the call, and appointed Caleb Earle, Edward Carrington, John Pitman and William E. Richmond, their delegates to the convention entrusted with the formation of the constitution. The convention met in Newport, in June, and soon perfected their labors. The constitution adopted by them, was submitted to the freemen, in their several town meetings in October. The votes in Providence were 653 in favor of the constitution and 26 against it. In the state the votes were 1668 in favor and 3206 against the constitution. Not only reason but prejudice was invoked to produce this result in the state.

In the summer of 1824, Lafayette again visited America. The circumstances attending this visit, and his reception wherever he went, so far as this country and this man are concerned, repudiate ingratitude as necessarily and inseparably the vice of a republic. He was every where greeted as the nation's guest, and the only matter of discussion or rivalry in regard to him, was, who should do him the greatest honor. When the news reached Providence, that he had arrived in America, the firing of



cannon and the ringing of the bells evinced the joy of the citizens. A town meeting was called to invite him to visit this town, and the town council and such as they should associate with them, were appointed a committee of arrangements. As soon as it was known that he was on his way to the east, the committee despatched Ephraim Bowen, one of his old companions in arms, to meet him in Connecticut. Lafayette reached Providence on the 23d of August, about noon. He was met at the line of the town, in Olneyville, by the committee of arrangements, and escorted by a very long military and civic procession, to the court house. The streets through which he passed were filled with citizens, while the waving handkerchiefs from the whole line of windows on either side showed that the ladies were not deficient in gratitude or curiosity. On arriving at the foot of the state-house parade, on North Main street, he alighted from his carriage and walked to the state-house through a double line of girls, dressed in white, who strewed his path with flowers as he passed. At the west entrance of the state-house, stood the old veteran, Capt. Stephen Olney. A glance from Lafayette assured him of his identity, and they sprung mutually forward and stood clasped in each others arms. Their eyes, were not the only ones then dimmed with tears. There was a contagion in their tears that extended through the crowd. He proceeded to the senate chamber, where the Governor of the state awaited him. Here he received the multitude of citizens who called upon him. After dinner he reviewed the troops that escorted him into



the town, and departed for Boston, laden with the prayers and blessings of this community.

The following address was presented to him on his arrival at the line of the town, by John Carlile, chairman of the committee.

“Sir—The General Committee, consisting of the Town Council of the town of Providence, and the members of the State Society of Cincinnati, who are associated with them in the pleasing duty, beg leave respectfully to address you.

We congratulate you on your pleasant and prosperous voyage across the Atlantic, and welcome you to the American shore, and to the town which we represent.

While the friends of liberal principles and good government, in both hemispheres, have abundant reason to be grateful for your disinterested and valuable services in the cause of freedom, the American people are peculiarly indebted to you, for the zeal with which you espoused their cause, in the darkest period of the revolution, and when the hearts of the most sanguine friends of their independence, were appalled at the dark clouds which were lowering on their political horizon. The hour of calamity is the most certain test of the sincerity of professions. You espoused the cause of America in such, and, parting from the endearments of domestic felicity, crossed the wide ocean and exposed your life, in defence of her liberties. Your military career was as brilliant as it was serviceable. The confidence of our beloved Washington was not mis-placed, when bestowed on you. In all vicissitudes of life, in prosperity and adversity, in every change of the political state of Europe, the affectionate regard of the American people has followed you; the nation will never forget your devotion or your services.”

To this address Lafayette returned a short and appropriate reply.

On the 10th of August 1824, died Ebenezer Knight Dexter, in the 52d year of his age. Reference may now be made to him as the benefactor of the town. When in succeeding time he



shall be robbed of this monopoly of praise, he will still be entitled to be remembered and respected as the one who set the first example of liberal munificence to his native town. He was educated a merchant, and pursued his business with such strict attention and industry, that he was able to retire with a fortune, when most men begin to think of accumulating one. For several years before his death he bore the office of Marshal for the district of Rhode-Island ; an office, the duties of which it is very difficult at any time faithfully to discharge, without making enemies. He held the office in most inauspicious times for himself. During the embargo, non-intercourse and war, his duties were arduous, and sometimes directly contravening the wishes and the interests of a large portion of this community. Yet he so carefully and skilfully managed, that he lost not the esteem and respect of his fellow townsmen, nor the confidence of the government. By his last will and testament he gave the greater part of his property, amounting as it was estimated to \$60,000, to his native town, to be appropriated to the support of the poor. The freemen in town meeting on the 22d day of November, passed the following resolution.

“Whereas, the late Ebenezer Knight Dexter, Esq., our lamented fellow citizen, actuated by a spirit of munificence and benevolence, worthy of all praise and honorable to the community of which he was a member, did in and by his last will and testament, after providing for individual objects of his attachment, constitute this his native town his residuary devisee and legatee of the estates real and personal, wherewith it pleased Divine Providence to bless him, in this life, by means of which



most liberal donation a very large and efficient fund, under the conditions of said will, remains at the disposal and control of this town, for effecting the judicious intentions of the said deceased, and especially ameliorating the condition of the unfortunate poor, for whose comfortable support and permanent and creditable relief, it appears to have been a principal object of the testator in his bounty, to provide ; and whereas, an act evincive of such generous attachment to the interests of his surviving fellow citizens, and of such tender concern for the cause of suffering humanity, ought to be met by the most open and sincere acknowledgment and acceptance ;

It is therefore resolved, by the freemen of the town of Providence, in legal town meeting assembled, more than forty freemen of said town being present, that they, the said freemen of said town, for themselves and their successors, will and do hereby accept of the said donation, so devised and bequeathed to them, in their corporate capacity, by the said Ebenezer Knight Dexter, Esq., deceased, according to the provisions of the said last will and testament, and subject to all and every the conditions thereof: That they receive this affecting testimonial of the regard and confidence of their departed townsman, with a deep, a grateful and a lasting sense of their obligations to him, for a bounty so important in its extent, originating in his own free and unsolicited will, and consecrated to purposes, so exalted and beneficial : That while they cherish his memory, with a pleasing reference to such traits of his character as claim the respect of those who remember him, and of those, who in future time shall hear of him, they will not forget that he has meritoriously acquired the titles of a public benefactor and a friend of the unfortunate ; and that they will take pride in connecting with his name the recollection, that in the bosom of their community was born and lived and died, a citizen of such large and sagacious views, who, by the energy of his benevolence, and the influence of his example, has accomplished so much to render his existence a blessing to generations yet to come—a citizen who in the last solemn act of his life, in the progress of that scene which crowns the character of man and tries the secrets of his heart, evinced, that he learned the true value and highest use of



those riches, which it sometimes pleases the Disposer of all good, to make the fruit of industry and prudence, and to bless, as means of effecting good will to man.

And it is further resolved, that the conditions under which the said donation to the town of Providence is, in and by the said last will and testament, devised and bequeathed, are altogether judicious and just, and as such are accepted, and ought to be performed by said town; and the faith of the said town of Providence is hereby solemnly pledged to the true and just performance of the said conditions, in every particular thereof, according to the provisions of said last will and testament."

They directed the property to be kept distinct from the other property and funds of the town, by the town treasurer, and the fund to be denominated the Dexter Donation; to be under the immediate direction of not more than five commissioners, to be called the Commissioners of the Dexter Donation.

Immediate measures were taken to erect an Asylum for the Poor, in pursuance of the will of Mr. Dexter. In January 1826, Isaac Brown, Caleb Earle and Truman Beckwith, were appointed the building committee, under whose superintendence the asylum was completed, in a style honorable to the town that appointed them, and in accordance with the views of Mr. Dexter. The sum expended by the town in that work, exceeded \$43,000. It was completed in 1830. It is located on a range of high land, about half a mile northeasterly from the market-house, a spot selected by Mr. Dexter himself, for that purpose. The building fronts the south, and is 170 feet in length. It is in three sections—a centre and two wings. The centre section is fifty feet front, by fifty-five from front to rear, projecting in advance of the wings, ten feet. The other two



sections are each sixty feet by forty-five. The centre basement is of granite, in courses, and the basement of the wings of natural faced stone. Above the basement, the walls are of brick, crowned with an eave cornice of freestone. The wings are two stories, with an attic; the centre, three stories, with a pediment in front and rear. A corridor divides the building lengthwise through the centre, in each story, and a transept corridor divides the centre section, extending from front to rear, making four spacious rooms in each story of this section. Each wing in each story, is divided into six rooms. The kitchen is in the centre basement; the basement of the east wing, on the south side of the corridor, is divided into store rooms, and cells for the confinement of the inmates of the institution for disorderly conduct; the north side of the corridor contains a fuel, furnace and washing room. In the basement of the west wing, is an eating room, a pantry, with a fuel and furnace room. In the third story of the centre section, is a chapel, fifty-one by forty-six feet. The architectural character of the building is Roman-Doric. From the roof of the centre section, rises a fine proportioned lanthorn or cupola, crowned with a ball and vane. The front of the building is lighted by 69 windows. Mr. John H. Greene was the architect. The mason work was executed by Messrs. Fisher & Andrews. The plot of ground on which the Asylum stands, contains about forty acres. Mr. Dexter directed in his will that this lot should be surrounded with a stone wall, three feet thick



at the surface of the ground, and eight feet high. The directions of the testator were scrupulously adhered to, in this particular. The wall was finished in 1840, in a style honorable to the city. It is 6220 feet in length, contains 7840 cords of stone, and cost about \$22,000.

The Asylum began to be occupied in the latter part of the summer of 1828. Mr. Gideon Palmer was then appointed master of the institution, which place he has ever since held, by annual appointment. The number of paupers at first received into it, was sixty-four, including five children. This number has been gradually increasing. In 1842, the number was one hundred and three, including fifteen children. The expenses, including salaries, for the year ending December 31, 1842, over and above all receipts from the house and farm, was about \$5500. Such of the inmates as are able to work, are required to labor for the city. But experience has shown, that those who cannot support themselves out of the Asylum, contribute but little towards their support while in it. If there were no saving in expense to the city over the old system, which there clearly is, it is abundantly evident, that the wants of the poor and impotent are better supplied, and that the declining years of poverty-stricken age are here robbed of many sorrows. About one-fourth of the inmates of the Asylum, is upon an average, insane. While this adds materially to the expense, it diminishes in a greater ratio, the comforts which the poor have a right to derive from this institution. Each class requires distinct and opposite rules of discipline and



government. In an institution, the main design of which is to provide for the wants of the poor, little can be done toward improving the condition of the insane. They can be kept there, but if more is looked for it will be looked for in vain.

In April 1827, a public meeting of citizens friendly to the promotion of temperance, was holden at the First Baptist meeting-house. This was the first temperance movement in Providence. Several resolutions were passed, which fell far short of total abstinence from intoxicating drinks. Some good undoubtedly arose from the measures then taken. They were the commencement of a series of measures which have resulted in a great reformation in society. Perhaps they went as far as the citizens of the town, with their information on the subject, were willing to go, and as far as public opinion then required they should go. Since then, in accordance with the same public opinion, enlightened by experience, great strides have been taken in reclaiming the drunkard, and in preserving the temperate. The temperance societies probably number more members than any other association. In "the Rhode-Island State Total Abstinence Society," formed January 5th, 1841, there were, in December, 1842, rising 30,000 members. "The City Temperance Society" formed November 1, 1836, contained 1380 members. "The Providence Washington Total Abstinence Society," formed July 8th, 1841, contained 3035." "The Young Men's Washington Total Abstinence Society," formed July 9th, 1841, contained 230. "The Sixth Ward Washington Total



Abstinence Society," formed April 8th, 1842, contains 300, and "The Marine Washington Total Abstinence Society," formed Aug. 29th, 1842, contained about 50. In each of these societies the members are pledged to total abstinence from every thing which intoxicates. The influence of this great body of total abstinent is already felt. Scattered as they are through all the ranks and gradations in society, they exert a controlling power over many who have not taken the pledge.

In 1830, the population had increased to 16,832; in 1825 it was 15,941. The increase of inhabitants, the consequent difficulty of holding town meetings, and injudicious expenditures of public money, induced some of the freemen to propose a change in the form of the municipal government of the town. In April 1829 the proposition to adopt a city form of government was agreed to by the freemen, by a vote of 312 to 222. The General Assembly of the state, in January 1830, granted a city charter, with a provision that it should again be referred to the freemen, and unless again adopted by three-fifths of the persons voting, should not go into operation. The small majority in favor of it at first, undoubtedly led to the introduction of this provision. On the 15th of February, the freemen gave in their ballots on the question, 383 for the charter, and 345 against it. Probably the town government, having withstood this attack, would have existed some years longer had it not been for "the riot," as it is called, in September 1831. The scenes here alluded to, will not soon be forgotten by any who witnessed them.



The first outbreak of popular feeling was on the night of September 21st. A number of sailors visited Olney's lane, for the purpose of having a row with the blacks, inhabiting there. After making a great noise there and throwing stones, a gun was fired from one of the houses. The greater part of the persons in the lane then retreated to the west end of it, and five sailors who had not been engaged in any of the previous transactions, went up the lane. A black man on the steps of his house, presented a gun, and told them to keep their distance. They in turn proposed taking his gun. This they did not attempt, but pursuing their walk a little further, then stopped. Here they were ordered by the black man "to clear out," or he would fire at them. This they dared him to do. He did fire, and one of their number was instantly killed. The first company who were still at the foot of the lane, then returned, tore down two houses and broke the windows of the rest. During the next day there was a great excitement. The sheriff of the county with other peace officers, were in Olney's lane early in the evening. As the mob increased in numbers and in violence of language, they were ordered to disperse, and seven taken in custody. Subsequently others were arrested, who were rescued from the officers. The sheriff then required military aid, of the Governor of the state, and at midnight the First Light Infantry marched to his assistance. The mob, not intimidated by their presence, assaulted them with stones. Finding that they could effect nothing without firing upon them, the soldiers left the lane, followed by



the mob, who then returned to their work and demolished six more houses in the lane and one near Smith street, not separating until between three and four o'clock in the morning. On the morning of the 23d, an attack on the jail being expected, the sheriff required military aid, and the Governor issued his orders to the Light Dragoons, the Artillery, the Cadets, the Volunteers, and the First Infantry, to be in arms at six o'clock in the evening. The mob appeared only in small force and did little mischief.—The military were dismissed until the next evening. On the evening of the 24th, there was a great collection of persons in Smith street and its vicinity. Soon they commenced pulling down houses. Upon this, finding it impossible to disperse or stay them, the sheriff called again on the governor, and the military were again assembled. During their march to Smith street they were assailed with stones.—They marched up Smith street and took post on the hill. Here both the Governor and the sheriff remonstrated with the mob, and endeavored to induce them to separate, informing them that the muskets of the military were loaded with ball cartridges.—This being ineffectual, the riot act was read and they were required by a peace officer to disperse. The mob continued to throw stones both at the houses and soldiers. The sheriff then attempted to disperse them by marching the Dragoons and Infantry among them, but without success. He then ordered the military to fire, and four persons fell, mortally wounded, in Smith street, just east of Smith's bridge. The mob immediately dispersed and peace was restored.



During these four evenings, eight houses in Olney's Lane, and nine near Smith-street, in Snow-Town, were destroyed or injured. On Sunday morning, the 25th, a town meeting was holden. It met at the Town House, but so great was the crowd, that it adjourned to the State House parade. Here several resolutions, lamenting the occasion which had made recourse to the military necessary to the civil officers, sympathising with the friends and relatives of the deceased, and approbating the course of the civil magistrates on the occasion, were passed with great unanimity. A large committee was appointed to prepare and publish a correct statement of facts relative to the riots; and it is from their report that the facts above stated were gathered. Believing the whole evil to have arisen from the inefficiency of a town government, at a town meeting holden on the fifth day of October, the freemen, without a dissenting voice, resolved that it was expedient to adopt a city form of government. They appointed a committee to draft a charter, consisting of John Whipple, Caleb Williams, William T. Grinnell, Peter Pratt, George Curtis and Henry P. Franklin. This committee reported on the 12th of the same month. The meeting then adjourned to the 22d to take the opinions of the freemen by ballot, on that day, resolving that if three-fifths should vote in its favor, that then the representatives of the town should be instructed to urge the passage of an act of the General Assembly, granting the same. On the 22d, 646 freemen voted, 471 for, and 175 against, the change. The representa-



tives of the town, therefore, according to their instructions, presented the subject to the consideration of the Assembly. Some citizens living in the westerly part of the town, preferred their petition to the same session, praying that if the city charter should be granted, it should extend no further westward than Broad-street; and that the rest of the town might be set off and formed into another town. Under these circumstances, the General Assembly granted the charter, to go into effect on the first Monday in June 1832, if three-fifths of the freemen voting, at a town meeting to be holden on the 22d of November then next, should be in favor of it. On the 22d of November, 647 freemen voted on the question, 459 for, and 188 against, the city charter. Thus was sealed the death warrant of the town of Providence. The city of Providence rose from its ashes; and our warmest aspirations are, that she may continue to increase in wealth, population and respectability.

The first election of City Officers was holden on the fourth Monday in April, 1832. Samuel W. Bridgham, Esq. was elected Mayor, which office he held by successive elections, without opposition, until his death, in December 1839. He was succeeded by the present Mayor, Thomas M. Burgess, Esq.

The Aldermen first elected were

Dexter Thurber, 1st Ward.	William T. Grinnell, 4th Ward.
Charles Holden, 2d Ward.	Henry R. Greene, 5th Ward.
John H. Ormsbee, 3d Ward.	Asa Messer, 6th Ward.

Since that time the following persons have holden that office.



Anthony Hezekiah,	Dunwell John,	Phillips John F.
Barker William C.	Holden Thomas R.	Williams Caleb,
Cady Joseph,	Martin Sylvanus G.	Wheaton James,
Clifford Benjamin,	Newel Stanford,	

The board of Aldermen elected in June 1842, is composed of

Edward P. Knowles, 1st Ward.	Thomas C. Hoppin, 4th Ward.
Thomas B. Fenner, 2d Ward.	Phinehas Potter, 5th Ward.
Richmond Bullock, 3d Ward.	Robert Knight, 6th Ward.

The Common Council first elected, consisted of the following named persons.

FIRST WARD.	THIRD WARD.	FIFTH WARD.
Thomas R. Holden,	Joseph S. Cooke,	Samuel Jackson, 2d.
Jesse Metcalf,	John Church,	Hezekiah Anthony,
William R. Staples,	William C. Barker,	Pardon Clark,
Peter Daniels.	Asa Pike.	William Tallman.
SECOND WARD.	FOURTH WARD.	SIXTH WARD.
Isaac Brown,	Geo. Baker, Presid't.	Caleb Williams,
Samuel Pearson,	James M. Warner,	William Olney,
Joseph Cady,	Benj. D. Weeden,	Thomas Seekell,
Cyrus Fisher.	Thomas B. Fenner.	Sterry Baker.

The following persons have also held that office since.

Angell Dexter,	Foster William,	Mason Amasa,
Ames Samuel,	Gould John,	Mason Nathan,
Andrews David,	Greene Simon H.	Miller William,
Anthony James G.	Grant Joseph,	Mallett Edward J.
Anthony Henry,	Godfrey Christo. C	Potter Roger W.
Angell Daniel,	Gurney Austin,	Pabodie William,
Brown James,	Gardiner Peleg W.	Phillips John F.
Brown John D.	Gillmore Joseph F	Potter Phinehas,
Bowen George W.	Ham William,	Padelford Seth,
Burrows John R.	Hughes John L.	Smith William A.
Curtis George,	Hill George,	Stimson John J.
Cook Benoni,	Hudson Horatio G.	Spencer Christo. V.
Cowing Martin K.	Hoppin William W.	Sweet Jesse B.
Carpenter Ebenezer,	Johnson Oliver,	Steere Enoch,
Cranston Barzillai,	Jackson Geo. W.	Trumbull Henry,
Carpenter Earl,	Knowlton Erastus F.	Thornton William L.
Everett Amherst,	Knowles Edward P.	Veazie Joseph,
Eddy John S.	Larcher John,	Willard Hezekiah,
Field Daniel,	Martin Stephen,	Young Edward R.
Fletcher Thomas,		



The Common Council elected in June 1842, is composed of the following persons.

## FIRST WARD.

Isaac Thurber,  
Joseph G. Metcalf,  
Stephen T. Olney,  
Jabez Gorham.

## THIRD WARD.

William Viall,  
John D. Jones,  
Eben Wade,  
Willard W. Fairbanks

## FIFTH WARD.

James C. Bucklin,  
Bradford Hodges,  
Henry S. Hazard,  
Samuel James.

## SECOND WARD.

William Andrews,  
James M. Earle,  
William P. Bullock,  
William S. Patten.

## FOURTH WARD.

Daniel T. Goodhue,  
Shubael Hutchins,  
Edward S. Williams,  
Amos D. Smith.

## SIXTH WARD.

Duty Greene,  
Israel G. Manchester,  
James E. Butts,  
Mnason Allen.



## CHAPTER SEVENTH.

### ECCELSIASTICAL HISTORY.

It is intended in this chapter to embody a succinct account of the rise, progress and state of each religious society in Providence, at the adoption of the city charter. To obtain the facts necessary for this purpose, the author addressed a circular to the pastors of the various churches, craving their aid and assistance in the matter. In most instances, the answers received have supplied the desired information, and in some, almost the very language of the answers is preserved. Where none were received, recourse was had to printed histories, where such existed, and to oral communications with the clergymen, officers and old members of the societies. I have designed to arrange the sketches in chronological order, dating each society at the time it first met as a distinct church.

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There can be little doubt, as to what were the religious tenets of the first settlers of Providence. At the time of their removal here, they were members of Plymouth and Massachusetts churches. Those churches, as it respects government, were Independent or Congregational, in doctrine, moderately Calvinistic and with regard to ceremonies, Pedobap-



tists. The settlers of Providence, did not cease to be members of those churches, by their removal, nor did the fact of their being members, constitute them a church, after it. They could not form themselves into a church of the faith and order of the Plymouth and Massachusetts churches, until dismissed from them ; and after such dismissal, some covenant or agreement among themselves was necessary in order to effect it. That they met for public worship is beyond a doubt ; but such meetings, though frequent and regular, would not make them a church. Among the first thirteen, were two ordained ministers, Roger Williams and Thomas James. That they preached to the settlers is quite probable, but there is no evidence of any intent to form a church, previous to March 1639. When they did attempt it, they had ceased to be Pedobaptists, for Ezekiel Holyman, a layman, had baptized Roger Williams, by immersion, and Mr. Williams afterwards, had baptized Mr. Holyman and several others of the company, in the same manner. By this act they disowned the churches of which they had been members, and for this, they were soon excommunicated, by those churches. After being thus baptized, they formed a church and called Mr. Williams to be their pastor. This was the first church gathered in Providence. It has continued to the present day, and is now known as

#### THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH.

Copious extracts from the early records of this church, are to be found, in the first volume of Benedict's History of the Baptists. Previous to 1775, the records were very irregular and scanty. Mr. Stan-



ford, who was then preaching for this church, spent much time and labor in reducing them to their present order. He derived much assistance from the collections that had been made a few years previous, by Morgan Edwards of Philadelphia, for a History of the Baptists in America. One volume of Mr. Edwards' collection, is now in the possession of the R. I. Historical Society. The following particulars in relation to the succession of pastors, up to the decease of Dr. Gano, is derived from Mr. Benedict's History.

Mr. Williams held the pastoral office about four years, and then resigned the same. Mr. Holyman was his colleague. His successors were Chad Brown and William Wickenden, the first ordained in 1642 and the other, by Mr. Brown.

Gregory Dexter succeeded Mr. Wickenden.— He had been a preacher of the Baptist denomination before he came to New-England. Thomas Olney, who succeeded Mr. Dexter, is said to have been born in Hertford, England, about 1631, and to have arrived in Providence in 1654. He withdrew and formed a separate church, which continued but a short time. The ground of difference was, the necessity of the laying on of hands. His successor, Pardon Tillinghast, came to Providence, in 1645. Ebenezer Jenckes succeeded him. He was born in 1669, was ordained in 1719, and died, pastor, in 1726. James Brown, grandson of Chad Brown, born in 1666, was next ordained, and continued pastor till his death, in 1732. Samuel Windsor succeeded Mr. Brown.



He was born in 1677, ordained in 1733, and remained in office till his death, in 1758. Thomas Burlingham was colleague pastor with Mr. Windsor, and was ordained at the same time with him. He left his charge some time before his death, which was in 1740, to preach to a new church in Cranston. Samuel Windsor, son of the preceding Samuel, was next in office. He was born November 1, 1722, and ordained June 21, 1759. About the year 1770, he made repeated complaints to the church, that his duties were too arduous for him to perform, and requested them to give him an assistant. The church acceded to his request, and John Sutton was invited to preach as his assistant, which he did for six months. After he left, James Manning, President of Rhode-Island College, removed to Providence with that institution. He was requested, soon after his removal, to preach to this society, after which, the pastor invited him to partake of the communion with the church. His acceptance of this invitation gave offence to some of the church members. Several church meetings were subsequently holden, at which President Manning's privilege of communion was repeatedly confirmed, Mr. Windsor then exerting himself against it. The reason assigned for this opposition was, that the president did not hold imposition of hands to be a pre-requisite to communion, although he himself had submitted to it, and administered it to such as desired it. Some attributed the change in Elder Windsor's views, to the president's "holding to singing in public worship, which was very disgusting to Mr. Windsor." In



April 1771, Mr. Windsor presented to the church a writing, signed by a number of the members, stating that they were in conscience bound to withdraw from such as did not "hold strictly to the six principles of the doctrine of Christ, as laid down in Hebrews vi. 1, 2." In May following, he also withdrew and joined the Separates. After advising with some other Baptist churches, this church, in July 1771, chose President Manning for their pastor. He accepted the office, and held it until near his death, in 1791. The general meeting, or Association of the Baptists, in September 1771, recognized the church under Mr. Manning, as the old church.

During the life of President Manning, John Stanford preached some months for this church and society.

Jonathan Maxcy succeeded Mr. Manning in the charge of the church, and in the presidency of the college. He was a graduate of Rhode-Island College, and has ever been regarded as one of her most talented sons. After about two years, he resigned both offices, and removed to Schenectady, to take the Presidency of Union College. Subsequently he was President of Columbia College, South Carolina, which office he held till his death.

Rev. Stephen Gano had the charge of this church, after President Maxcy, for thirty-six years. He was a native of New-York, born in 1762, and educated a physician. He received ordination at the age of twenty-three, and in 1792, removed to Providence and became pastor of this church. He died in August 1828, universally lamented. No man ever had



more friends, or warmer ones, than Dr. Gano. If any of his hearers estimated the pulpit labors of other ministers above those of their pastor, it was not because they were supposed to possess more piety toward God, or more love to man, than he did.

After remaining more than a year and a half without a pastor, they united in calling Robert E. Pattison to that office. He accepted their call, and commenced his labors in March 1830. In August 1836, his health having become infirm, he resigned his office, and accepted the Presidency of Waterville College, in Maine.

William Hague, pastor of the First Baptist church in Boston, was elected to fill the vacancy caused by Mr. Pattison's resignation. He entered on his duties on the 25th day of June, 1837, and remained pastor until August 1840, when he resigned to take charge of the Federal-Street church, Boston. During this period, Mr. Hague was absent eight or nine months, in Europe, for the improvement of his health.

The church being again without a pastor, and Mr. Pattison having in the mean while resigned the Presidency of Waterville College, he was a second time called to the pastoral office, and resumed his duties in April 1841. In February 1842, he was appointed one of the Corresponding Secretaries of the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions, and at the earnest solicitations of several friends of the mission, he accepted the appointment, after having a second time tendered to the church his resignation as their pastor, to take effect after the first Sunday in April 1842. The vacancy caused by this resig-



nation had not been permanently filled, in September following.

Most of the preceding statements are founded on the records of the church. Other sources of information have been resorted to. Where that information differs from the record, the difference will now be given, together with such other facts in relation to this church, as have been collected from all sources whatever. The record states that Mr. Williams held the pastoral office about four years. A letter of Richard Scott, appended to "A New-England Fire-Brand Quenched," and published about 1673, states that Mr. Williams left the Baptists and turned Seeker, a few months after he was baptized. Mr. Scott was a member of the Baptist church for some time, but at the date of this letter, had united with the Friends. According to Mr. Williams' new views as a Seeker, there was no regularly constituted church on earth, nor any person authorized to administer any church ordinance, nor could there be, until new apostles should be sent by the Great Head of the church, for whose coming he was seeking. He was not alone in these opinions. Many, in his day, believed that the ministry and ordinances of the christian church were irretrievably lost, during the papal usurpation. It has been supposed, by some, that Mr. Williams held these opinions while in Massachusetts, and that this was the reason he denied the church of England to be a true church, and withdrew from his connexion with the Salem church. Aside from the statement of Mr. Scott, above quoted, that Mr. Williams turned Seek-



er, after he joined the Baptists and walked with them some months, the supposition is shown to be groundless, by his administering baptism in Providence, as before stated, and joining with the first Baptist church there. These acts he could not have performed, had he then been a Seeker.

Mr. Holyman may have succeeded Mr. Williams, after this change in his views, but it is quite improbable that so small a society as this must have been, would have needed two pastors, at the same time. Mr. Holyman removed to Warwick soon after January 1643. His proposed removal may well account for the ordination of Chad Brown in 1642.

There were two Baptist churches in Providence, as early as 1652; one of the six, and the other of the five, principle Baptists. This appears from a manuscript diary kept by John Comer, a Baptist preacher, in Newport. The diary is now in the possession of that gentleman's descendants, in Warren. It states that one of the members of the first Baptist church in Newport, "came to Providence, and received imposition of hands from William Wickenden, pastor of a church there, lately separated from the church under Thomas Olney," and that Mr. Wickenden and Gregory Dexter, returned to Newport with him, and that the same ordinance was administered to several others, who in 1656, withdrew from the first church in Newport, and formed a new church, "holding general redemption, and admitting to communion, only those who had submitted to imposition of hands." The records of the



church make Mr. Dexter the successor of Mr. Wickenden, and Thomas Olney, the successor of Mr. Dexter. They also state, that Mr. Olney was born in 1631, and came to Providence in 1654. Now, the records of the town shew, that Thomas Olney, senior, came to Providence about 1638. He was there baptized, with his wife, about 1639. They had a son Thomas, who came with them, a minor, and who was afterwards town clerk, for many years. He is probably the person referred to in the church records. Dr. Styles states, in his manuscript itinerary, that in 1774, he conversed with John Angell, then aged 83, who told him that his mother was daughter of Gregory Dexter, and that Mr. Dexter was the first Baptist elder of the six principle church. There is in the cabinet of the Historical Society, a letter from Governor Jenckes, dated March 19, 1730, which contains some facts as to the succession and religious tenets of the elders of this church. From this, it appears, that one Dr. John Walton, formerly a practising physician in the county, was then preaching to a Baptist church in Providence. He, it seems, was in favor of singing in public worship. The governor was his intimate friend. He says, "as to his singing of psalms, I have heard him say, he would not urge it as a duty, on the church." Dr. Walton expected some allowance by way of contribution, for his services. The governor writes on this point, "Elder Tillinghast taught, that a pastor might receive, by way of contribution, although for his own part, he would take nothing." It seems further, from the same letters, that Dr. Walton op-



posed the laying on of hands, if “performed to obtain the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost,” and that he thought the want of it ought not to be a bar to communion with those who were rightly baptized. Governor Jenckes adds, “at first, in the Baptist churches in this colony, those under laying on of hands continued fellowship with those who were not, until one taught that laying on of hands was a doctrine of devils; then there arose a separation.” Here he evidently refers to Mr. Olney. After Mr. Olney’s death and after a meeting-house had been built, it is probable, only one meeting was kept up, and one church, under Mr. Tillinghast—that Mr. Jenckes succeeded Mr. Tillinghast, neither of them insisting so strongly on the points of former difference as they would have done, had there been a society of opposite sentiments in the same town with them. After Mr. Jenckes’ death, while Dr. Walton was preaching, other differences led them to stir again, the old embers of contention. Mr. James Brown succeeded him. What were his principles appears from the following certificate.

May 25, 1732. Whereas there was a meeting appointed by some of the Baptist church of Providence this present day, at Elder James Brown’s, the few of us that have met together to reconcile this woful breach or division that has happened of late, about the bounds of our communion, we think it needful to bear each others’ burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. The difference between us is this, that some of us have bore with larger communion than others. We shall endeavor, by the help of God, not to offend our brethren in this thing, nor any thing whereby it shall offend their consciences, but shall endeavor to be a building up of peace and tranquility within the spiritual walls of Jerusalem. We do all further agree, that there be no



contradictions, but that we may all speak the same things, for as we all agree and allow the six principles in Heb. vi. 1. 2. to be the doctrine of Christ and to be the bounds of our communion, so we ought to be of one body and not tearing one another to pieces. We further agree that if any brother or sister shall join in prayer without the bounds of the church, they are liable to be dealt with by the church for their offending their brethren.

Samuel Fisk,	Edward Manton,
Joshua Windsor,	James Brown,
Elder Place,	Samuel Windsor,
Thomas Burlingame jr.	Thomas Olney,
James King,	James Brown, jr.
John Dexter,	Joseph Sheldon,
John Dexter, jr.	Ebenezer Jenckes,
Jonathan Jenckes,	Elisha Greene,
Nicholas Sheldon,	Daniel Sheldon,
Benjamin Carpenter,	Joseph Williams, jr.
Edward Fenner,	Daniel Sweet,
Edward Mitchel,	Daniel Fisk.

Samuel Windsor, whose name is attached to the foregoing certificate, was probably the first pastor of that name. If so, his sentiments are also known. The sentiments of the second Mr. Windsor appear in his note sent to the church, about the time of the division, in 1771.

Mr. Edwards, in the volume of his collections, before referred to, gives the following as the succession of pastors in this church. Roger Williams, from the establishment of the church, until he left the colony for England, in 1643, and that he then resigned it to Messrs. Brown and Wickenden. Mr. Holyman was his assistant. Mr. Chad Brown died between 1660 and 1665, leaving the church in charge of his colleague. Messrs. Dexter, Tillinghast, James Brown, Jenckes, Windsor, Burlingham, Wind-



sor and Manning, successively held the same office, but the times of their appointments are not given with any exactness. Thomas Olney, it is there said, withdrew from the church with a few others, in 1654, being dissatisfied with the doctrine of laying on of hands. They formed a new church, which continued its separate existence until 1715, when Mr. Olney resigned the care of it.

It will be seen that there is considerable discrepancy between the several statements here given, as to the doctrines held by successive pastors of this church. The reader has before him, all that I have been able to collect, upon the subject, from all sources.

It is stated in the records of the church, as quoted by Mr. Benedict, that "the church, at first, met for worship in a grove, unless in wet and stormy weather, when they assembled in private houses;" that afterwards, Pardon Tillinghast, "at his own expense, built the first meeting-house, about the year 1700." This house was situated on the west side of North Main-street, nearly opposite Star-street. In 1711, Mr. Tillinghast, in consideration of the love and good will he bore the church, over which he was then pastor, executed to them and their successors in the same faith and order, a deed of the meeting-house and the lot on which it stood. In the same instrument, he describes the faith and order of the church to be the same as that now held by the Six Principle Baptists. The same record of the church states, that "a larger house was erected in its place in 1718." This can scarcely be the case,



for in 1726, they were erecting a house. This appears by their application to the town for leave to occupy with their new house then building the lot south of that on which the old house stood. The request was granted by the town. This house was raised May 30, 1726, as appears from the following memoranda, copied from an old account book of Richard Brown, who, for many years, was clerk of the proprietors.

“May the 30th, 1726. The account of what charge I have been at this day as to the providing a dinner for the people that raised the Baptist meeting-house in Providence (it being raised this day) is as followeth.

One fat sheep which weighed 43 lbs. the quarter,	£0,14,04
For roasting the said sheep, &c.	8
For one lb. of butter	1
For two loaves of bread which weighed 15 lbs.	2
For half a peck of peas	1,03

December the 6th day. To money which I delivered to

Mr. Thomas Olney, which I gave toward the finishing said house,

3,13,06”

In 1740, the church had permission of the General Assembly, to occupy the court house for meetings for public worship. The occasion of the application does not appear. The house erected in 1726, was occupied for a meeting house, until the erection of the one now in use. The old house and lot was sold by leave of the General Assembly, and the proceeds invested in the present one. In January 1773, the town granted them a lot, sixteen rods by twenty, to be laid out in the cove, opposite Steeple street. It is very doubtful whether they had any intention of occupying this lot, at the time they applied for the grant of it. The tradition is, that they



then had in view the lot on which their present house stands, which belonged to John Angell, and was improved by him as an orchard. He, they thought, would not sell it to be used as a site for a Baptist meeting house, for any consideration. After the grant of the town to them, they procured one of the members of the Episcopal church to purchase the orchard and convey it to them. They broke ground for their present house, on the first day of June 1774. It was opened for public worship, for the first time, on the 28th day of May 1775, though it was not completed until some months after this. This is a wooden structure, eighty feet square of the Roman-Ionic order of architecture, having a steeple at the west end, one hundred and ninety-six feet high, embellished with all the appropriate ornaments of that order. This house, standing amid the array of meeting houses in Providence, is not excelled by any one, in chasteness and beauty of design, or in manner of execution. Mr. Sumner was the chief architect. The main floor originally contained one hundred and twenty-six square pews. The roof and galleries are supported by fluted columns. The ceiling over the body of the house is a continued arch; over the galleries it is intersected. The interior was altered in 1834, and some think improved. The old pulpit and sounding board, together with the square pews, were removed, and an elegant pulpit of more modern style, and long slips substituted. Convenience may have been consulted in these alterations, but the unity of the house was wholly destroyed by them. The steeple was fur-



nished with a good clock and bell, both imported from England. The bell weighed 2515 lbs. and bore the following motto.

“ For freedom of conscience, the town was first planted,  
Persuasion, not force, was used by the people.  
This church is the eldest, and has not recanted,  
Enjoying and granting, bell, temple and steeple.”

This bell was split in ringing, in 1787. Jesse Goodyear afterwards recast it, at Hope Furnace.— The present bell weighs 2387 lbs. and bears the following inscription: “ This church was founded A. D. 1639, the first in the state, and the oldest of the Baptists in America.” Great dissatisfaction was expressed at the tone of this bell when it was first hung. Some individuals attempted to break it with a blacksmith’s sledge hammer. They exhausted their rage and strength in breaking a small piece from it. Either this improved the tone or else taste has changed, for this is now regarded as one of the finest toned bells in Providence.

In 1774, some of the principal members of this church and society, obtained a charter of incorporation, under the name of “ The Charitable Baptist Society,” in order more readily to manage their concerns and property. This corporation is the legal owner of the meeting house. Some, at first, thought that the acceptance of such a charter was a departure from the principles upon which the Baptists first started, as it was seeking the aid of law, to carry on their religious concerns. It was answered, that they neither sought for, nor would accept, any power to raise money for the support of public worship, except by voluntary contribution. In 1808,



this society obtained power to tax pews for repairs of the house, and in 1832, the further power to raise money, by similar taxes, for the support of the ministry. This is not now considered as an infringement of the voluntary principle, "since no one is thus taxed, except by his own consent."

This church, from its first establishment, never had any written creed or covenant. They have ever professed to make the Bible their standard of faith and practice. It would seem that there has scarcely been any time when the members were uniform in their belief. Nor has the faith of the church as a body, always been the same. Sometimes it has confessedly leaned toward the Six Principle and General Baptists, and sometimes toward the Five Principle and Particular Baptists. To which side its founder inclined, it is quite impossible to say. Now it leans towards the particular Baptists.

The power of choosing and settling the pastor, is in the church, subject to be controlled by the Charitable Baptist Society. At the first, it is probable, the Pastors received but little for their services; and that little was raised by voluntary subscriptions and contributions. Some even doubted the right to receive what was so collected. The expenses of public worship, including salaries of pastors, are now raised by taxation on pews.

In early times, the question whether singing should be used in public worship was gravely debated in this society; now, they listen to the swelling notes of an organ, and it raises no suspicion that they have departed from the truth or the ancient faith of their predecessors.



For more than a century after the establishment of this church, the banks of the Moshassuck and Wanasquatucket witnessed the burying in baptism of those who united themselves with it. These streams were the Jordan, under whose waves they passed, as they professed, in obedience to the commands of the Head of the church. It is questionable whether some of the early members, if they should revisit the scenes of their earthly pilgrimage, would approve of the baptistery, in which converts of later times profess to follow the example of their Lord. They would see in many things, a change, even in some which they deemed unalterably fixed by the last testament of their Master.

In 1730, before any towns were set off from Providence, there were at least two other Baptist churches within its limits; one in that part subsequently called Smithfield, established in 1706, and the other in that part called Scituate, established in 1725. Several churches have been formed, either in whole or in part, out of the members of this church. In addition to those now in Providence, of which sketches will be given in their order, there were formed churches in Johnston, Cranston, Pawtucket, Pawtuxet, East-Greenwich, and perhaps others. Still this is one of the largest churches in the state. It numbered, in September 1842, about five hundred and forty members. This church still retains its independency. It makes a part of the Warren Association of Baptists, and looks to it for advice and counsel.



## THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

The first appearance of Friends in New-England, was in 1656. In July of that year, two females of this denomination of christians, arrived at Boston, from Barbadoes. This event gave rise to the first of a long succession of cruel and sanguinary laws against them in the province of Massachusetts, and in all the other colonies in New-England, excepting only, the colony of Rhode-Island. They attempted to compel this colony also to the same course, at a very early period, as will appear by an extract of a letter written to Mr. Clarke, the agent of the colony in England, by a committee appointed by the General Assembly, November 5, 1658, published on page 122. That letter shows the character of the early Friends in New-England, and the indomitable spirit of the state, in relation to religious freedom. These circumstances, combined with others, rendered futile the attempts of the other colonies to prevent the ingress of Friends into their jurisdictions. The several towns in the colony of Rhode-Island, received and comforted them, in their sufferings, and the consequence was, the adoption of their opinions by some of the inhabitants of almost every town, at a very early period. The first person in Providence, who adopted the principles of Friends, is stated by tradition to be Richard Scott. He was one of the early settlers of the town; at first he joined the Baptists, but remained with them but a short time. His wife Catharine, and two daughters Patience and Mary, were also among the first members of the Friends' Society. All three of these suffered corporeal pun-



ishment in Massachusetts, at an early period, the wife as early as 1658. One of the daughters subsequently intermarried with Christopher Holder, whose name appears, more than once, among those who suffered corporeal punishment in Massachusetts, as Friends. That these met together for worship with such others as agreed with them in principles, is highly probable, though there is no direct proof of the fact. In 1666, Thomas Burnyeate, a Friend from England, held a meeting at Providence, as appears from his journal. Their numbers increased both by converts from among their neighbors and by emigration from the neighboring colonies, to such a degree, that in 1672 the government of the colony was in the hands of Friends. This year George Fox, the founder of the sect, visited the island of Rhode-Island, and attended the Yearly Meeting of Friends in New-England, then holden in the house of Governor William Coddington. This house was standing until within a few years, and some trifling parts of it, by way of memorials, are now preserved by the Historical Society of the State. While on this visit, George Fox held a meeting in Providence, "in a great barn, which was thronged with people." This was just after the yearly meeting, and in all probability was the immediate cause of the challenge sent by Roger Williams to him and Friends with him, to debate fourteen propositions which he had drawn up in relation to Friends' doctrines. The challenge bore date July 13, but did not reach its destination in Newport, until July 26, after George Fox had left this part of the country. It contained the four-



teen propositions, seven of which he wished to debate at Newport, and seven at Providence. John Stubbs, John Burnyeate and William Edmundson, English Friends, who were in Newport when the challenge arrived there, accepted it without hesitation. Roger Williams was himself so much engaged in the matter, that he rowed himself in his canoe to Newport, a distance of thirty miles, though then over seventy years of age. They spent three days in debate, at Newport, and one at Providence, convincing more persons of the honest zeal of the disputants, than of the truth of the positions assumed by either of them. Mr. Williams published his account of the debate in a volume entitled "The Fox digged out of his Burrowes," which was answered by a volume equally ponderous, entitled "A New-England Fire-Brand Quenched." Both are curiosities now, and should be examined as such, bearing in mind that a far greater latitude in language was then allowed in polemical divinity than would now be allowed in political debates. No memorial is left of the place in which the day's dispute in Providence was holden.

The foregoing facts prove that there were Friends in Providence at an early period, but they go but a little way to show that they held regular meetings for worship, and much less, the existence of any meeting house there. From a minute in the records of the Rhode-Island quarterly meeting, it seems, that as early as the 4th of 4th mo. (then June) 1691 "it was proposed that some have a mind to buy Sucklin's lot of land at Providence." The object of the purchase could have been no other than to obtain



a site for a meeting house, or it would not have been brought before this meeting. No order was taken on the matter at that time, but from what subsequently appears in the same records, it is probable the lot was obtained.

From the same records, it appears, that a week-day meeting was established at Providence as early as the 1st mo. (March) 1701. In the following year the project of building a meeting-house was resumed. It was laid before the Portsmouth monthly meeting, and by them referred to the Rhode-Island quarterly meeting, holden on the 2d of 10th mo. (December) 1701. The minute-made by the quarterly meeting was as follows :

“It was proposed and agreed unto, that two Friends should go to Providence, the persons are Gideon Freeborn and Abraham Chace, to see what encouragement Friends and Friendly people will give, every way, toward building said house, and make their return to said meeting at Portsmouth this day, five weeks.”

At the next meeting, 1st of 1st mo. 1702, further progress was made in the matter, as appears by the following extract from the records :

“As to the business of building a meeting house at Providence and at Weekopimsett, and settling a meeting at Freetown, which matter was accounted should have been resolved before this meeting, yet the weather being so tedious did obstruct : and whereas Gideon Freeborn and Abraham Chace were appointed to see what encouragement Providence Friends and Friendly people would give as to a house being built there, in answer to which, Abraham Chace or his brother William, to day brought a subscription of forty of the inhabitants of Providence, amounting to the value of £60,15, as has and may be seen, which Friends were glad to see, but their dimensions being bigger than the land they speak of, given for that use, would bear, so this meeting pro-



pose a house of thirty feet square to be built, which is according to said land given, if money can be raised to answer the premises; in further pursuance of which, this meeting have desired Walter Clark, Jacob Mott, Joseph Wanton and Abraham Chace, they being also free, God willing, to go to treat with Providence people further about the premises, to know what the cost may be judged, and who of them will undertake the building and take this subscription, with other money that is first to be seen how can be raised, and make return of what may be done to Rhode-Island, that themselves, Dartmouth and Greenwich members of our said quarterly meeting, may make way toward the obtaining of what money may be wanting of the said subscription for the accomplishing the premises."

It would be pleasing to present the subscription referred to above, if it could be found. It probably contained the names of most of "the Friends" and "Friendly people" then in Providence. The lot referred to was probably "Sucklin's lot," mentioned in 1691. The size of the lot must have been very small, if not large enough to accommodate a building more than thirty feet square. After the laying off of the purchasers' house lots on the east side of North and South Main streets, the proprietors conveyed "warehouse lots," generally forty feet square, on the opposite side of those streets. One of these warehouse lots was probably referred to, but where Sucklin's house lot or warehouse lot was, I have not been able to ascertain.

Subsequent quarterly meetings agreed to an exchange of location for one near the dwelling house of Eleazer Arnold, and upon the last named one, a meeting house was erected between June 1703 and July 1704. The following extracts from the same



records show the progress of the business from time to time:

“As to what relates to Providence meeting-house, some of the Friends appointed having been there, and it seems, could not fully resolve what the last quarterly meeting requested, by reason the land given to set a meeting-house on was so nigh the common road, so that the subscribers desired that it might be exchanged for some higher up; it might be so this meeting might judge it convenient, that those Friends that the meeting appointed before, be yet continued to make a further progress in the premises, answerable to the meeting’s request, and make return of what they do therein, at the next monthly men’s meeting at Portsmouth, on Rhode-Island, if may, without too much difficulty, or at furtherest, at the next men’s meeting at Newport, about 21st 5th mo., so that one of these meetings, in behalf of the quarterly meeting, may act and transact, as near as may be, to what the precedent quarterly meeting hath proposed in the premises, which monthly meeting, we also desire, to acquaint the next quarterly meeting what they do in the premises.

3d 1st mo. 1702–3. At this meeting it was agreed, that a meeting house should be built at Providence, if money can be raised to accomplish the same. There was also a subscription begun of about forty of the inhabitants of Providence, about £60 and now (illegible) is appointed to hand it about; to encourage Friends in the premises, when he thinks meet, in behalf of our quarterly meeting.

1st 4th mo. 1703. “Inasmuch as the monthly men’s meeting of Rhode-Island at Portsmouth, the 27th of the 2d mo. 1703, did encourage, upon their request, the Providence Friends getting their meeting house proposed to be built near Eleazer Arnold’s, the major part collecting thereto being willing, the which matter is also approved by this meeting, understanding also, that it is generally agreed on amongst themselves, and now that the Rhode-Island monthly meeting takes notice and encourages the subscription in behalf and until the next quarterly meeting, &c.”

5th 7th mo., 1704 “Whereas it hath been proposed and agreed unto at several precedent quarterly meetings, for the en-



couraging the building a meeting house at Providence, and several Friends have contributed thereto already, and Friends there have been courageous and noble being but few, and have built a fair large meeting house for worship of God, and the burden lying pretty heavy on some particulars, they have expectation of further assistance from this meeting according to the first encouragement. This meeting agrees to make a subscription towards glazing and finishing said house, and that each monthly meeting appoint two Friends to encourage it in pursuance of the same, to be delivered to Thomas Arnold, Edward Smith and William Wilkinson, or to whom they shall appoint it for said use."

Thomas Story, in his journal page 359, states, that on the "28th 5 mo (July) 1704, he attended a yearly meeting, at Warwick, at Benjamin Barton's house, and continued by adjournment to the meeting house in Providence the next day, being the first day of the week." In the records of Providence, there is a deed dated October 2, 1708, from Eleazer Arnold to Thomas Smith and others, of a tract of land near the dwelling house of Eleazer Arnold, seven rods by twelve, "on which stands a certain meeting house, of the people called Quakers." From a most interesting letter received by me from John Osborne, clerk of the present Smithfield monthly meeting, in answer to one requesting information, I learn that this is what is now known as "Lower Smithfield" meeting house. At the date of all the proceedings referred to, Providence comprehended the whole county of Providence, except Cumberland. The town of Smithfield was set off from it and incorporated in 1730. The following extracts from a valuable letter from Thomas Howland, clerk of Greenwich monthly meeting, is inserted as explanatory of some of the usages of Friends, without a knowl-



edge of which, it would be difficult to understand some of the following statements.

“ It appears by earliest records that I have in my possession, that there was a ‘ monthly meeting for business, established by the advice of the yearly meeting for New-England, in the fifth month 1699, called ‘ Greenwich monthly meeting.’ This meeting, it appears from various circumstances, embraced all the members of the society living west of Narragansett Bay. Although it appears that soon after the organization of Greenwich monthly meeting, that Friends of Providence sent representatives to that meeting, it does not determine either the place of their individual residence or the place of their assembling.”

In the beginning of 1718, “ Providence monthly meeting” was set off from “ Greenwich monthly meeting,” and consisted of Providence and Mendon meetings. The name was subsequently changed, in 1731, to “ Smithfield monthly meeting.” In 1783, the present Providence monthly meeting was set off from Smithfield monthly meeting. At the time the first Providence monthly meeting was established, John Osborne says, in his letter before referred to, “ there were four meetings for worship, viz. Mendon, and what are now upper and lower Smithfield, and Providence; but at what precise period of time these meetings commenced, I am unable to say.— The records of the monthly meeting make no allusion to it.”

The first meeting house at upper Smithfield, ac-



according to the same letter, was built in 1719. The minute by the monthly meeting directing it, being as follows :

“ 10th mo. (December) 1719. Whereas, this meeting has had a matter in consideration, about building a meeting house at Woonsocket, on the burying ground lately purchased ; to build a meeting house twenty feet square, and John Arnold is appointed to build the same, the height thereof left to him.”

This was the second house of worship built by Friends in Providence. It remained until 1775, when the house now standing there was erected, in its place.

In 1724, commenced the design of erecting another meeting house in Providence. The earliest notice of the intention is in the records of the Smithfield monthly meeting in the following minute :

“ 9th month (November) 1724. Whereas, it is concluded by this meeting, a house shall be built in Providence town, and there being a frame offered us, it is concluded by this meeting, that if Edward Smith and Thomas Arnold approve of the frame, that the money be paid to Daniel Abbot, as quick as can be, with convenience.”

It was then laid before the quarterly meeting, on the 8th of 11th month (January) 1724-5 as appears by the following extracts from the records :

“ The Friends of Providence, having, both at our last, and also at this quarterly meeting, represented the service of a meeting-house being built at Providence town, which their concern is well approved, and this meeting will also contribute something towards accomplishing the same, and also thinks proper, that the matter may be proposed to the yearly meeting in order for a subscription by particulars or otherwise as may be thought proper.”



The yearly meeting holden in the 4th month (June) of the same year, passed the following order:

“The quarterly meeting of Rhode-Island having represented to this meeting, that it is most likely for the advancement of truth, to build a meeting-house in the town of Providence, which proposal is approved of, and for the present that the work may be going forward, do agree to raise the sum of one hundred pounds, of which it is desired that the quarterly meeting of Rhode-Island do collect the sum of eighty pounds; and also desires the quarterly meetings of Sandwich and Scituate to collect the sum of twenty pounds, and to send the same up to Samuel Aldrich, Thomas Arnold, and Benjamin Smith, of Providence.”

The next quarterly meeting took the matter into consideration, and the following entry appears on their records :

“9th 5th mo. 1725. We received an epistle from the last yearly meeting on Rhode-Island, informing that they having approved of the proposal for building a meeting-house in the town of Providence, and think proper to raise and contribute the sum of £100 towards the same, and desires this quarterly meeting to contribute the sum of £80 of said hundred, which this meeting proportions as follows, viz.

The monthly meeting of Rhode-Island, the sum of	£52
The Monthly meeting of Dartmouth,	10
The monthly meeting of Greenwich and Kingston,	8
The monthly meeting of Nantucket,	10
	<hr/>
	£80

And send their several proportions as soon as conveniently they can to Samuel Aldrich, Benjamin Smith and Thomas Arnold, of Providence, and make return to the next quarterly meeting.”

The house was probably built soon after this, and is a part of the meeting-house now standing between South Court and Meeting streets. The deed of the lot was made in the beginning of the year 1727, and



describes it as then having on it a meeting house. An addition was subsequently made to it in the years 1784-5. The town was accustomed, for a long time, to hold their town meetings in this house, and a school was, for many years, kept in the upper part of it.

At the quarterly meeting holden 10th day 2d mo. (April) 1730, Greenwich monthly meeting gave notice,

“That they are in want of some assistance by money towards finishing a meeting-house at Shantituck, in which case this meeting desires further information as to the necessity and circumstances, &c.”

Shantituck, or Meshantituck, as it was sometimes called, was in that part of Providence, since set off and incorporated under the name of Cranston. It remained, however, a part of Providence, until 1754, and hence the meeting house there should be considered as in Providence, making the fourth erected there by Friends. At the following quarterly meeting, the Greenwich monthly meeting inform,

“That besides the subscription made for building the meeting-house at Meshantituck, they have expended the sum of £49,19, for work already done, and considerable more is wanted to finish it.

It is therefore recommended to the several monthly meetings to consider the said Friends of Meshantituck, and lend them such help as in brotherly freedom they may think meet, and it is desired, that what is collected for said service may be brought up to our next quarterly meeting.”

From the foregoing, it is apparent that before the division of Providence, there were at least four so-



cieties of Friends having meeting-houses, within the town. The oldest was what is now called lower Smithfield, the second upper Smithfield or Woonsocket, the third in Providence town, and the other in Cranston. It is not presumed that either of these would vie with the costly structures built in more modern times by other denominations of Christians. They were probably small wooden buildings, sufficiently large to accommodate the company ordinarily assembling in them, in the construction of which, regard was had to convenience and comfort, rather than to appearance. The buildings and lands were generally held by trustees for the use of the Society, but are now by an act of the General Assembly in 1827, held by officers termed "Overseers of Society" for the time being. It is impossible to ascertain the numbers attached to these several meetings at the time of their first formation. With their present population, excepting that of Providence, we have nothing to do. Providence meeting, by a document published in 1836, was supposed to contain 158 individuals. The number has probably increased since that account was taken.

#### FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

The worshipping assembly next gathered in Providence, I suppose to have been a Congregational Pedobaptist Society. This was formed about 1720. Undoubtedly there were some Pedobaptists here, at all times, from the first settlement. They may have met, as a distinct worshipping assembly, previous to 1720, but such meetings, if any took place, were



not stated and regular. Nor is it probable that there was a large number of these individuals here at any time previous. The principle held forth from the settlement of the town, of an entire separation between church and state, had been pronounced a foul heresy, and the consequence of that heresy, a multiplicity of sects, all equal in the eye of the law, had been repudiated by the churches of Plymouth and Massachusetts, as subversive of all religion, and pregnant with incalculable evils to civil society, and the best interests of man. In those days of enthusiasm and bigotry, great must have been the inducement, which could have led any orthodox religionists to take up their abode in such a place, in point of religion, as Providence was represented and believed to be. On the other hand it cannot be doubted, that when any such came to Providence, they did not receive that hearty welcome which awaited their opponents. They were admitted to equal civil rights, it is true, but not to equal love or respect. Instead, then, of being surprised that no worshipping assembly was gathered earlier than 1720, our surprise should be, that there was a sufficient number of Pedobaptists, at that time, in Providence, to render such a step advisable. In corroboration of these views, the following letter is inserted from three distinguished Congregational Clergymen in Massachusetts, and the answer thereto. Jonathan Spreague, who subscribes the answer, was a Baptist preacher.

“To the honorable Joseph Jenckes, Esq., late Deputy-Governor, William Hopkins, Esq., Major Joseph Wilson, Esq., Joseph Whipple, Esq., Col. Richard Waterman, Esq., Arthur



Fenner, Esq., ——— Wilkinson, Esq., Philip Tillinghast, Esq., Capt. Nicholas Power, Esq., Thomas Harris, Esq., Capt. William Harris, Esq., Andrew Harris, Esq., ——— Brown, Esq., Jonathan Burton, Esq., Jonathan Spreague, Jun. Esq., and to the other eminent men in the town of Providence. Pardon our ignorance if of any of your Christian names, or if your proper order be mistaken.

Honorable Gentlemen,—We wish you grace, mercy and peace, and all blessings for time and for eternity, through our Lord Jesus Christ. How pleasing to Almighty God and our Lord and Redeemer, and how conducive to the public tranquillity and safety, an hearty union and good affection of all pious protestants, of whatever particular denomination, on account of some difference in opinion, would be, by the divine blessing, yourselves, as well as we, are not insensible of. And with what peace and love, societies of different modes of worship have generally entertained one another in your government, we cannot think of without admiration. And we suppose, under God, 'tis owing to the choice liberty granted to protestants of all persuasions in the Royal Charter graciously given you; and to the wise and prudent conduct of the gentlemen that have been improved as governors and justices in your colony. And the Rev. Mr. Greenwood, before his decease at Rehoboth, was much affected with the wisdom and excellent temper and great candour of such of yourselves as he had the honor to wait upon, and with those worthy and obliging expressions of kind respects he met with when he discoursed about his desire to make an experiment, whether the preaching of our ministers in Providence might not be acceptable; and whether some, who do not greatly incline to frequent any pious meeting in the place, on the first day of the week, might not be drawn to give their presence to hear our ministers, and so might be won over, by the influence of Heaven, into serious godliness; and although God has taken that dear brother of ours from his work in this world, yet it has pleased the Lord to incline some reverend ministers in Connecticut and some of ours to preach among you; and we are beholden to the mercy of Heaven for the freedom and safety they have enjoyed under the wise and good government of the place,



and that they met with kind respect, and with numbers that gave a kind reception to their ministrations among you. These things we acknowledge with all thankfulness. And if such preaching should be continued among your people, designed only for the glory of God and Christ Jesus in chief, and nextly for promoting the spiritual and eternal happiness of immortal, precious souls, and the furtherance of a joyful account in the great day of judgment, we earnestly request, as the Rev. Mr. Greenwood in his life-time did before us, that yourselves, according to your power and the influence and interest that God hath blessed you with, will continue your just protection; and that you add such further countenance and encouragement thereunto as may be pleasing to the eternal God, and may, through Christ Jesus, obtain for you the great reward in Heaven. And if ever it should come to pass that a small meeting-house should be built in your town to entertain such as are willing to hear our ministers, we should account it a great favor if you all, gentlemen, or any of you, would please to build pews therein; in which you and they as often as you see fit, may give your and their presence and holy attention. And we hope and pray that ancient matters, that had acrimony in them, may be buried in oblivion; and that grace, and peace, and holiness, and glory, may dwell in every part of New-England; and that the several provinces and colonies in it may love one another with a pure heart fervently. So recommending you all, and your ladies and children, and neighbors and people to the blessing of Heaven, and humbly asking your prayers to the Divine Throne for us, we take leave and subscribe ourselves your servants,

PETER THACHER,  
JOHN DANFORTH,  
JOSEPH BELCHER."

"To John Danforth, Peter Thacher, and Joseph Belcher, committee of the Presbyterian Ministry.

Sirs—We, the inhabitants of the town of Providence, received yours, bearing date October 27, 1721, which was read publicly, in the hearing of the people, and we judge it uncivil to return you no answer. But finding the matter to be of religious concernment, we counted it our duty to ask counsel of God, lest



we should be beguiled as Israel was by the Gibeonites. And inasmuch as the sacred scriptures were given forth by the Spirit of the living God to be our instructor and counsellor, we shall therefore apply ourselves to them. And in the first place, we take notice of the honorable titles you give to many of us. Your view, as we take it, is to insinuate yourselves into our affections, and to induce us to favor your request. But, we find flatteries in matters of religion to be of dangerous consequence; witness the Hivites, who said, *We are your servants, and have heard of the fame of the God of Israel.* In this way did Joash set up idolatry after the death of Jehoida. Elihu abstained from flattery for fear of offending God, while the enemies of Judah, for want of the fear of God, practised it. By the same means was Daniel cast into the lion's den, and Herod sought to slay the Lord Christ; and some at Rome sought to make divisions in the church of Christ by flattering words and fair speeches, to deceive the simple; but, saith the Spirit, *such serve not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly;* and saith the apostle Peter, *through covetousness and feigned words they shall make merchandize of you.* To conclude this article. We see that flattery in matters of worship has been, and now is, a cloak to blind men and lead them out of the way; and serves for nothing but to advance pride and vain glory. Shall we praise you for this? We praise you not. Next. You salute all as saints in the faith and order of the gospel, wishing all of us blessings for the time present and to all eternity. It is not the language of Canaan but of Babel to salute men of all characters as in the faith of the gospel. This is the voice of the false prophets, which daub with untempered mortar, sewing pillows under every arm-hole, and crying, peace! peace! when there is no peace. Is this your way to enlighten the dark corners of the world? Surely, this is darkness itself. Moreover, You highly extol liberty of conscience to men of all persuasions, affirming it to be most pleasing to God, and tending most to love and peace, and the tranquillity of any people. And you say, *We are not insensible of this any more than you.* To which we say, *Amen;* and you well know it hath been our faith and practice hitherto. Fourthly. We take notice, how you praise the love and peace that dissenters of all ranks entertain one another with, in this



government; and it is as you say, *to your admiration*: and you suppose *that* under God, *it is owing to the choice liberty granted to protestants of all denominations in the Royal Charter graciously given us, and to the discreet and wise rulers under whose conduct we enjoy this happiness.* We answer, This happiness principally consists in our not allowing societies to have any superiority one over another, but each society supports their own ministry of their own free will, and not by constraint or force upon any man's person or estate; and this greatly adds to our peace and tranquillity. But the contrary, which takes away men's estates by force, to maintain their own or any other ministry, serves for nothing but to provoke to wrath, envy, and strife. This wisdom cometh not from above, but is earthly, sensual and devilish. In those cited concessions we hope too, that you are real and hearty, and do it not to flourish your compliments; otherwise you make a breach on the third commandment. This is but a preface to make room for your request, which is, *That we would be pleased, according to our power, to countenance, protect, and encourage your ministers in their coming and preaching in this town of Providence.* To which we answer:—We admire at your request! or that you should imagine or surmise that we should consent to either; inasmuch as we know, that (to witness for God) your ministers, for the most part, were never set up by God, but have consecrated themselves, and have changed his ordinances; and for their greediness after filthy lucre, some you have put to death; others you have banished upon pain of death; others you barbarously scourged; others you have imprisoned and seized upon their estates. And at this very present you are rending towns in pieces, ruining the people with innumerable charges, which make them decline your ministry, and fly for refuge some to the Church of England, and others to dissenters of all denominations, and you, like wolves, pursue; and whenever you find them within your reach, you seize upon their estates. And all this is done to make room for your pretended ministers to live in idleness, pride, and fullness of bread. Shall we countenance such ministers for Christ's ministers? Nay, verily. These are not the marks of Christ's ministry; but are a papal spot that is abhorred by all pious protestants. And since you wrote this letter the constable of Attleborough has been taking away



the estates of our dear friends and pious dissenters to maintain the minister. The like hath been done in the town of Mendon. Is this the way of peace? Is this the fruit of your love? Why do you hug the sin of Eli's sons and walk in the steps of the false prophets, biting with your teeth, and crying peace? but no longer than they put into your mouth but you prepare war against them. Christ bids us beware of such as come to us in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves; and your clothing is so scanty that all may see your shame, and see that your teaching is like Gideon's, who taught the men of Succoth with the *briars and thorns of the wilderness*. In the next place; You freely confess that we entertained you kindly at all times. We hope we are all so taught of God *to love our enemies, and to do good to them that hate us, and pray for them who despitefully treat us*. And since you admire the love and peace we do enjoy, we pray you to use the same methods and write after our copy. And for the future never let us hear of your pillaging conscientious dissenters to maintain your own ministers. O, let not this sin be your everlasting ruin. Further. You desire that all former injuries, done by you to us, may be buried in oblivion. We say, Far be it from us to avenge ourselves, or to deal to you as you have dealt to us, but rather say with our Lord, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!* But if you mean that we should not speak of former actions done hurtfully to any man's person, we say, God never called for that nor suffered to be so done; as witness Cain, Joab and Judas, which are upon record to deter other men from doing the like. Lastly. You desire of us to improve our interest in Christ Jesus for you at the throne of grace. Far be it from us to deny you this, for we are commanded to pray for all men. And we count it our duty to pray for you, that God will open your eyes and cause you to see how far you have erred from the way of peace; and that God will give you godly sorrow for the same, and such repentance as is never to be repented of; and that you may find mercy and favor of our Lord Jesus Christ at his appearing. And so hoping, as you tender the everlasting welfare of your souls and the good of your people, you will embrace our advice; and not suffer passion so to rule as to cause you to hate reproof, lest you draw down vengeance on yourselves and on the



land. We, your friends of the town of Providence, bid you farewell. Subscribed for, and in their behalf, by your ancient friend and servant for Jesus' sake,

JONATHAN SPREAGUE.

*Feb. 23, 1722."*

In 1721, they set about erecting a house for public worship. Dr. Hoyle, one of the most active and efficient of their number, visited the neighboring colonies to solicit pecuniary aid, and he met with considerable success in his mission. On his return, and without the concurrence of his associates, he commenced erecting a house on a lot of land, near the junction of Pawtuxet and High-streets. So great was the dissatisfaction, at the conduct of Dr. Hoyle, that the house was torn down after it had been partially finished, and, as tradition says, in the night season.

In 1723, the society erected a house for worship at the corner of College and Benefit-streets, now known as the "Old Town House." When first erected, it was much smaller than at present. I have been informed by Job Danforth, a highly intelligent old gentleman of this society, who died in 1838, at the advanced age of ninety-four years, that two additions have been made to the original structure, one on the south and the other on the east part of it. I am induced to believe that the enlargement on the east side, consisted simply in the addition of a tower, which according to the same authority, formerly stood there. When the upper part of this was taken down, a belfry was erected on the west side of the house on the roof.

In 1794, the society sold this house to the town,



and commenced erecting a more spacious and elegant one, at the corner of Benevolent and Benefit-streets. They began to raise this building on the 19th day of August 1794, on which occasion, Dr. Hitchcock, the pastor of the society, delivered an address. It was dedicated to the service of Almighty God, on the 16th day of August 1795. This edifice was of wood, eighty-seven by seventy-one feet on the ground. The front was ornamented with two spires, on whose fine proportions the eye rested, with peculiar satisfaction and delight. Mr. Caleb Ormsbee was the architect. The whole house was a beautiful copy of one of the most beautiful houses of worship in Boston. It was destroyed by fire on the morning of the 14th of June 1814.

Measures were immediately taken by the society for the erection of the still more spacious and elegant structure, which they now occupy. It stands on the same site with the preceding one. The corner stone of this house was laid with appropriate religious ceremonies, on the 29th day of May 1815, and the building dedicated, on the 31st of October in the following year. It is built of granite taken from the Waterman "Snake-den" ledge, in Johnston. The front and two sides are of wrought granite in courses, the rear, of rubble work. It measures seventy-seven feet by one hundred, including a vestibule of twenty feet. The main wall is thirty feet high above the basement. The tower is of stone, eighty feet high to the bell deck. The whole spire is about two hundred feet high. This society is indebted to the genius and taste of John H. Greene, for their



beautiful house. Its cost exceeded \$50,000. Since its erection some alterations have been made in the interior of the building, which may have added to its convenience but they have not increased its beauty.

Previous to the settlement of any minister over this society, several clergymen from the neighboring colonies, occasionally preached for them. Dr. Styles in his itinerary, mentions a Mr. Dorrance and a Mr. Danforth as among these. Samuel Moody, of York, Maine, also preached for them. The society were desirous of obtaining his services as pastor, but his church at York refused to part with him. With their consent however, he preached at Providence three months. During this period he baptized sixteen persons. They had no settled minister until 1728. In the spring of that year, Josiah Cotton commenced preaching for them, and in the following autumn was ordained, eighteen churches being present by their delegates to assist at the ordination. The church was formed on the same day that Mr. Cotton was ordained, and consisted of nine persons, viz. Cornelius Salisbury, Nathaniel Blague, William Randall, Joseph Bagley, Timothy Carpenter, Joseph Barstow, John Church, Thomas Pollock and John Taylor. Mr. Cotton remained in the pastoral charge of this society and church until 1747, when he was dismissed, at his own request. After an interval of about five years, they gave John Bass an invitation to preach for them as their stated minister. He commenced his services in 1752 and continued with them until 1758, when he left the ministry and commenced the practice of medicine. He



died in October 1762, in the 46th year of his age. During his ministry it is said "the number of hearers did not oftentimes exceed twenty, and the church was so scattered and divided that it was scarcely known whether there were any of them left." In 1761, the members of this scattered church again united, and being joined by some members of other churches, renewed their covenant, the whole number then, being eleven males and ten females. The following year, they obtained the services of David S. Rowland, who continued with them until he asked and received his dismissal, in 1774. Dr. Lathrop, of Boston, officiated with them nearly the whole of the year 1775. After his return to Boston the revolutionary war broke up the society so much, that they had only occasional preachers, till the fall of 1780, when Enos Hitchcock, was applied to and engaged to become their permanent pastor. He was not installed, however, until October 1783.—His connexion with the church and society continued until dissolved by his death, on the 27th of February 1803. Mr. Hall, the present pastor of this society, in an historical discourse, from which most of the materials for this memoir have been taken, thus most eloquently and truly, closes his sketch of Dr. Hitchcock. "The character of his mind, the working of his heart, the creed of his life, might be written in a line: 'faith, hope and charity, these three, but the greatest of these is charity.'" He left a legacy exceeding \$6,000 to the society, besides which, it is said he frequently subscribed toward his own salary of £200.



Henry Edes; of Boston, succeeded Dr. Hitchcock in the pastoral charge. He was ordained in July 1805. His ministry terminated in June 1832, at the request of the pastor.

The present pastor, Edward B. Hall, was installed in his office on the 14th of November 1832.

The lot on which "the old Town House" stands, was originally conveyed to trustees for the use of the society; the only secure mode which could be adopted by an unincorporated society. In 1770, a number of persons belonging to the society, procured a charter of incorporation, under the name of "the Benevolent Congregational Society," for "the purpose of raising a fund by free and voluntary subscriptions, contributions, legacies and donations, for the support of public worship, in the Congregational Society in the town of Providence aforesaid, of which the Rev. David S. Rowland is at present minister." It included thirty-six persons by name, among whom were many of the most influential individuals in the town and colony. This it is believed is the oldest charter for such a purpose, granted in this state. The increase both of church and society has been great, since 1761. It is now one of the most numerous congregations in Providence, and it has always numbered within its pale, its full proportion of the most honored inhabitants. Among its most munificent benefactors, Enos Hitchcock and John Dorrance should be named.

In former years, it was much more common than now, for religious societies to apply to the General Assembly for leave to raise money by lotteries.—



Most of the early societies in Providence did so, and this among the rest.

Two churches and societies have sprung from this one since its establishment. The first in point of time was the present Beneficent Congregational church, from which the Richmond street Congregational Society and the High Street Congregational Society have arisen, and the other the Westminster Congregational Society. The circumstances attending the formation of each, will be given hereafter. The present number of communicants is about two hundred.

#### ST. JOHN'S CHURCH.

Notwithstanding the assistance that members of the Church of England received from the mother country, toward maintaining ministers and erecting houses for public worship, in the colonies, I can find no trace of Episcopalianism in Providence, until about 1722. The society established for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign parts, as early as 1704, sent Mr. Honyman a missionary to Newport. He occasionally preached at Providence. In one of his communications to the society, he stated that "no house could hold the congregation" at Providence, "so that I was obliged to preach in the open fields." This was in 1722, when he exerted himself in gathering a subscription to erect a church. Dr. Humfries, in his history of that society, draws no flattering picture of the state of religion in Providence, about this time. "The people," says he, "as described above," (that is in the copies of the



letters, from the missionaries sent by the society) "were negligent of all religion, till about the year 1722; the very best were such as called themselves Baptists or Quakers, but it was feared many were Gortoneans or Deists." Bad as they were, they subscribed £250 among themselves, obtained a subscription of £200 more in Newport, £100 in Boston, and £200 in other places, and then borrowed £200, with which to erect a church. And on St. Barnabas' day, 1722, they raised one, sixty-two feet long by forty-one broad, and twenty-six feet high. Dr. Stiles says this church was erected in 1723. The first date is obtained from Dr. Humfries' History, above referred to. The chief contributor was Col. Joseph Whipple, who gave £100. This church occupied the same spot on which St. John's church now stands. It was pulled down in 1810, but will long be remembered as a remarkably neat and pretty church. The steeple was not erected until a long time after the main body of the church. In 1762 and in 1771, leave was given by the General Assembly to raise money sufficient to repair the church and to build a steeple, by lottery, from which it is perhaps reasonable to infer that the steeple was not built until after that time. The first bell in Providence, according to Mr. Job Danforth, was hung in the belfry of this steeple.

The corner stone of St. John's church, was laid on the 5th day of June 1810, and the edifice completed so as to be dedicated on the 11th June 1811. The exterior walls of this building are of natural faced stone, laid in irregular blocks, a kind of ma-



terial peculiarly appropriate for the style of the building. It is eighty-two by sixty-seven feet on the ground, with a chancel sixteen feet by thirty-four. It contains one hundred and eight pews. Much credit is due to John H. Greene, the architect, for the consistency which pervades all parts of this building, within and without, satisfying the beholder with it, as being a whole, the work of a single mind.

Tradition refers to Gabriel Bernon, a French Huguenot, who came to this country at the revocation of the edict of Nantz, as one of the earliest members of the Church of England, in this town. It is supposed that it was through his influence that the missionary at Newport occasionally visited and preached at Providence, and that it was at his house that the meetings were holden. This house occupied the site of the brick house, No. 149 on North Main street, and a part of it is still standing in the rear of that house.

There is a little discrepancy between Dr. Humphries, in the work above referred to, and Dr. McSparran, in a pamphlet entitled "America Dissected," as to the Episcopal minister who first preached in Providence. The former would seem to give that honor to Mr. Honyman. Dr. McSparran says that he entered on the duties of his mission to Narragansett, in 1721, and adds, "I was the first Episcopal minister that ever preached at Providence, where for a long time I used to go four times a year; but that church has now a fixed missionary of its own." This was written in 1753. The truth was that pro-



bably both he and Mr. Honyman occasionally preached here. The first person settled over the church here, as a "fixed missionary," was George Pigot. He was sent by the society, to Stratford, Conn. in 1722. The following year he removed to this town on his own suggestion, and was settled over this church. He remained here but a short time, when he was succeeded by Mr. Charro. Mr. Charro was dismissed from his charge on account of improper conduct. In October 1730, Arthur Brown became rector. He was highly esteemed by his congregation. He remained with them till 1736, when he removed to Portsmouth, N. H. and was succeeded in 1739 by John Checkley. Mr. Checkley was a native of Boston. He received his education at Oxford, and was admitted to holy orders by the Bishop of Exeter. When he visited England for the purpose of ordination, several of the dissenting ministers of Massachusetts, sent a remonstrance against him, containing such allegations as delayed his admission to holy orders for some time. From all accounts, he was a man of eccentric character. His ideas of the deportment proper for the christian minister were formed from the English clergy of the established church, and not from the puritan ministers of New-England, and, of course, the latter deemed him erroneous. Before he came here, he published "Some Strictures on Episcopacy," which subjected him to a prosecution in Massachusetts for a libel.—It was written in the spirit of the times, but on the wrong side of the question, for the author to escape punishment. Mr. Checkley continued in discharge



of his duties as rector until his death in 1753. During his sickness and after his decease, the pulpit was supplied by several Episcopal clergymen until 1756, when John Graves succeeded him in the rectorship. Mr. Graves attended the service of the church until July 1776. He then declined to officiate, unless he could be permitted to read the usual and ordinary prayers for the king, which he considered himself bound by his ordination vows to offer for him. The patriotism of his hearers forbade this, and the consequence was, that the church was closed, most of the time during the war of the revolution. During a part of this time however, Thomas F. Oliver officiated as lay reader. After the restoration of peace, Mr. Graves offered his services to the parish, which were refused, they being under obligations to Mr. Oliver. Mr. Oliver soon received ordination from Bishop Seabury, the first American Bishop, and remained in this parish until 1786, when he left them, by their consent, to officiate among his friends and relations at Marblehead. Mr. Graves died here in November 1785. In September 1786, Moses Badger succeeded to the rectorship, which he held until his decease in September 1792. Abraham L. Clarke succeeded him, commencing his labors in March 1793. He resigned the rectorship March 14, 1800. Nathaniel Bowen, afterwards Bishop of South-Carolina, succeeded him in the rectorship, November 12, 1801. Mr. Bowen left this church for St. Michael's church in Charleston, S. C. in November, 1802. Nathan Bourne Crocker performed divine service in this church on Sunday, October 24, 1802, as lay reader. He con-



tinued to officiate in this capacity until May 1803, when he was ordained, and chosen rector. In January 1804, ill health obliged him to resign. John L. Blackburne succeeded him, in December 1805, and in March 1807 he resigned. The same month Mr. Crocker was again invited by the church to become its rector. He entered upon the duties of his office at once, and has continued in the discharge of them, without interruption, to the present time.

In May 1794, John Smith, of Providence, presented a petition to the General Assembly in behalf of the minister, church-wardens, vestry and congregation of the Episcopal church, representing that "that church was founded in the reign of George the First, then king of Great Britain, of blessed memory, who reigned over the colonies of Great Britain with justice and paternal regard; that, in consequence thereof, the proprietors of the said church from the purest motives of gratitude and affection, named it King's Church; but the conduct of the present king of Great Britain and of the people thereof, hath been so totally different, that the citizens of the United States have been under the necessity of declaring themselves independent, and renouncing monarchy in all its forms; and that said minister, church-wardens, vestry and congregation conceive the present name of the said church to be highly improper, and pray that the said name may be abolished, and the church called St. John's Church, in Providence." The Assembly readily granted the petition. It was not strange that the proprietors wished a new name. Beyond a doubt their old one, borne as it was by a



society who professed to belong to what in common parlance was called the church of England, had been the means of subjecting them most unjustly to suspicion, ridicule, and even absolute injury. In October following, a number of persons received from the Assembly a charter of incorporation under the name of "the United Society of St. John's Church." The petitioners were members of the congregation of St. John's church, and the object was to raise a fund by voluntary contribution and subscription for the more effectual support of public worship. In 1812, upon "the petition of the minister, church-wardens, vestry and congregation of St. John's church," and "the United Society of St. John's church," their two charters were abrogated and a new corporation created under the name of "St. John's Church, in Providence."

Since this last charter, public worship has been supported by taxes on pews, income of funds, and voluntary donations. In government, doctrines, rites and usages, it conforms to and is a part of the Protestant Episcopal Church, of the United States of America. The number of communicants in 1842, was between 180 and 200.

#### BENEFICENT CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY.

During the time that Josiah Cotton had the pastoral charge of the First Congregational Society, a part of his church and congregation seceded from his watch and care. The seceders deemed his preaching destitute of sound evangelical principles. They accused their pastor of preaching "damnable



good works." The final separation took place on the 7th day of March 1743. Among the seceders were, deacon Joseph Snow, Benjamin Cary, Thomas Knowlton, Alexander M'Crary, Solomon Searle, Peter Tefft, John Paine, Joseph Snow, jr. (afterwards their minister) Ebenezer Knight and Barzillai Richmond, together with fifteen females. These composed a large part, if not a majority, of Mr. Cotton's church, at the time, and, it is believed they claimed to be the first church, in opposition to Mr. Cotton and his adherents. They began religious meetings by themselves, and opened for the worship of God, the first meetings that were stately attended and maintained on the west side of the river. In the language of the record of Mr. Cotton's church, "they set up a separate meeting, where they attended to the exhortations of a lay brother, who had been brought up in the business of house-carpentry." "Every method for healing the uneasiness that had arose, proved fruitless and vain; enthusiasm raged with a most furious impetuosity. These held separate meetings, at a private house, where they were entertained, on the Lord's day, with loud and vociferous declamation, on the downfall of Babylon, and on the necessity of coming out and being separate, not touching the unclean thing; and such like exhortations were liberally held out." The lay brother alluded to, was Joseph Snow, jr. whom they elected to the office of pastor and teacher. After some years, he was induced by their repeated solicitations, and, as he believed, by the Spirit and Providence of God, to consent to be ordained; which cer-



emony took place on the 12th day of February 1747. The separatists were suspended from Mr. Cotton's church on the 25th of March 1744. Soon after this, they commenced erecting a house for public worship; and the tradition is, that the elder, profiting by his previous knowledge of "house-carpentry," "led some of his principal members into the woods and there cut down and hewed timber for that purpose." The house was erected upon a lot of land given them by Daniel Abbott, on the 29th day of May 1744. It is now occupied by the meeting-house of the society. The house was built of wood, and originally measured thirty-six by forty feet. As the congregation increased, they enlarged it, first by building a piece in the middle, then by adding a piece to the rear, and finally by building a story under the house, as the hill was removed upon which it was originally built. The spire had attained nearly one hundred feet in height, in 1772. The bell was imported from England about 1760, and is still in use by this society. This continued the meeting-house of the society until 1808. George Whitefield, Robert Sandeman, Mr. Ashbury, first superintendent of the Methodists in America, Mr. Murray, and other eminent ministers often preached in it. These circumstances with the length of time the house had been used for religious uses, and the very many associations connected with it, induced the society, for some years, to submit to many inconveniences, rather than to its demolition. When they yielded to necessity, in 1808, the older members contemplated its destruction with any feelings but those of pleasure. The present



meeting-house was erected in 1808-9. This is of brick, much larger and more commodious than the former one, having one hundred and fifty pews on the ground floor, and spacious galleries. The expense of erecting this house was paid by sale of pews, and a fund of nearly \$20,000 was realized, over and above the cost of the house. In the autumn of 1836, it was materially improved, both in its appearance and in its convenience, externally and internally, at an expense nearly equalling its first cost. The eye rests with pleasure on its lofty dome and imposing facade.

In October 1785, the General Assembly granted a charter of incorporation to six of the members of this church, under the name of "the Beneficent Congregational Society." The first meeting under it, was holden in April 1786. The measure did not, at first, meet with the approbation of all the members of the old society. After considerable time, it was unanimously adopted, and has ever since been their fundamental law.

Mr. Snow continued the beloved pastor of a united people for many years. In 1783, "the fair character and exemplary lives" of such as had been formerly suspended from Mr. Cotton's church, in 1744, compelled that church to take off their censure, and to restore them to full fellowship. The peace and harmony thus restored, was soon disturbed in an unlooked for and unexpected manner. On the 27th of May 1791, James Wilson, a native of Ireland, as he was passing on a journey through Providence, was invited to preach for this society.



After preaching ten discourses, he was engaged as colleague pastor with Mr. Snow, who had previously requested an assistant. Mr. Wilson continued to preach for this society for nearly two years, when it was proposed to ordain him as colleague pastor. Mr. Snow manifested a decided opposition to this measure; objecting to Mr. Wilson's doctrinal sentiments, he having been a Methodist minister before he came to this country. It is said, that while a majority of the church members sided with their old elder, a majority of the society took part with Mr. Wilson, and he was accordingly ordained. This was in October 1793. Upon this, Mr. Snow and his adherents withdrew themselves, and held meetings in Mr. Snow's own house, forming a new religious society, now known as the Richmond Street Congregational Society.

Previous to the ordination of Mr. Wilson, the church agreed upon a constitution, and at the same time adopted a covenant and articles of faith, which remain unaltered to the present day. Twenty males and eight females signed the covenant, at first. Although Mr. Wilson was ordained only as colleague to Mr. Snow, after that ordination, he performed all the duties of pastor.

On the 12th March 1835, Mr. Wilson requested of the church an assistant in the ministry, he having completed the 75th year of his age. The church acceded to his wishes, and on the 30th June following, invited Cyrus Mason, of the Cedar-Street church, New York, to become his associate pastor. He accepted the call, and was installed on the 7th



of October. After continuing with the church about one year, he asked a dismissal, on account of ill health, and returned to New York. In May 1837, the church invited Mark Tucker, of the Second Presbyterian Church in Troy, N. Y., to become associate pastor, in which office he was installed, on the 21st of June following. Mr. Wilson closed his labors and his life, on the 14th of September 1839, in the 80th year of his age. Dr. Tucker has now the sole pastoral care of the church and congregation.

In December 1834, the church dismissed fourteen of its members, at their request, to unite with others in forming what has since been called the High Street Congregational Church. Notwithstanding this, the church has increased in its numbers, so that in 1842 it contained 468 members. The congregation is one of the largest in the city.

The power of choosing a pastor resides in the church, while the control over the house is with the society. The pews are liable to taxation only for repairs of the house; the expenses of public worship are defrayed from the income of funds and voluntary contributions.

#### RICHMOND STREET CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

After the ordination of James Wilson as colleague pastor with Joseph Snow over the Beneficent Congregational Church and Society, Mr. Snow and a part of the church, withdrew and set up a separate meeting by themselves. The grounds of their withdrawal, were the doctrinal sentiments of Mr. Wilson. It is supposed that a majority of the church mem-



bers adhered to Mr. Snow, while a majority of the congregation were the adherents of Mr. Wilson.— On this ground, the present Richmond Street Church has sometimes claimed to be the elder of the two. In fact the claim has sometimes been extended to priority over the First Congregational Society.— Without pretending to decide this nice question of precedence, I have deemed it proper to rank this as the third Congregational church in Providence, because Mr. Snow and his adherents when they withdrew from the church under the care of Mr. Cotton, left them in possession of the name and property of the church and Society. And so when they left the Beneficent Congregational Society, they assumed a new local habitation and name for themselves.

They at first met for public worship at the dwelling house of Mr. Snow. They soon however commenced the erection of a meeting house. This was the wooden structure standing on the corner of Pine and Richmond-streets, and now generally recognized under the name of “the old Tin Top,” from the material with which the top of the spire is covered. It was dedicated on the 16th of August, 1795, but was not completely finished until the autumn of 1807, when Thomas Williams, then pastor of the church, solicited and obtained the means of finishing it, from Massachusetts and Connecticut. The bell was the gift of Mr. Williams, from his own resources. This house was abandoned by the society, after the erection of their present house in 1827. Since then it has been used successively by



various new societies as a place of worship. Its walls have listened to almost all the doctrines which divide and sub-divide Christendom. After it ceased being a house of public worship, it was transformed into a circus, and since then into a brewery, for which purpose it is still used. The present meeting house also stands on Richmond street a little west of the old one. It is built of wood, seventy-five by sixty-five feet on the ground, having one hundred and ten pews on the lower floor. Its style of architecture is chaste, and the building is of pleasing appearance and fair proportions. The expense of its erection was defrayed by sale of pews. It was dedicated to the worship of Almighty God on the first day of January 1828.

Mr. Snow continued his pastoral care of this church and society until his death, which occurred on the 10th of April, 1803, in the 89th year of his age and 58th of his ministry. Stephen Gano, then pastor of the First Baptist church, preached his funeral sermon. In it he observed, "if uniform piety, unshaken faith in the divine government, a persevering attachment to the religion of Jesus Christ, an ardent love to the souls of men, an exemplary life of godliness, and a sweet serene composure in prospect of the approaching dissolution of his body, give evidence of being approved of God, we may safely conclude our friend and father in the Gospel is now mingling his songs of praise among the spirits of just men made perfect, enjoying the reward promised to the faithful laborer." Few men receive, and fewer deserve, such a character.



“ After Mr. Snow’s death, his church and people were few in number and feeble in all respects. Under these discouraging circumstances, rather than to have no meetings for public worship, and having been befriended by the Baptists in Mr. Snow’s day, they received into their pulpit Joseph Cornell, a Baptist minister, who came and offered his services. While he preached in their meeting-house there was an unusual attention to religion. During that attention Mr. Cornell formed a Baptist church, and received into it a number from the remnant of Mr. Snow’s flock, and gained nearly the whole congregation to his measures ; and claimed a right to possess and occupy the meeting-house.

To these movements and claims of Elder Cornell, Mrs. Snow, the widow of Elder Snow, and a few sisters in the church, accounted themselves obliged to object, in duty to God, and by their public and solemn profession of religion. Mrs. Snow took many journeys to obtain the advice and assistance of ministers, in their trials and sorrows.

In the year 1806, she obtained for a few weeks, James Davis, an itinerant minister of the gospel, to preach in their meeting-house. Whilst Mr. Davis was employed, Elder Cornell and his people held their meetings on the sabbath in the town house, though they held weekly meetings in Mr. Snow’s meeting-house, until, by a singular occurrence, they were induced to leave that house ; yet they still claimed a right to it. This claim was renounced, after a proper examination of the subject, during the first months of Thomas Williams’ ministry.

In September 1806, Mrs. Snow, by the advice of Dr. Emons, applied to Thomas Williams, of Pomfret, Connecticut, to come to Providence, and be their minister. To this application, after the most serious consideration for four months, he gave a reluctant and trembling consent. He came to Providence on the first of January 1807, with no prospect of a pecuniary compensation for his services. On the first sabbath he had for his hearers, Edward Wilbur, who was never able to learn to read ; John Clarke, an excommunicated free-will Baptist ; and Massa Basset. Mr. Basset sat in the gallery, played on a bass-viol and sang tenor, assisted by Mrs. Elizabeth Sampson, and her sister,



Rebecca Snow, nieces of Elder Snow. Besides these persons, he had from eight to twelve aged, pious women, all of whom, except two or three, were widows.

After Mr. Williams had been in Providence a month, in which he attempted by the means in his power, to ascertain whether there remained of Mr. Snow's people what ought to be accounted a church; he attempted to call a meeting of such men, as had been members of the church during his ministry. To accomplish this object, he rode ten miles into Smithfield, and there found Joseph Whipple, who had been one of Mr. Snow's members, but had gone to other meetings for some years; he rode eight miles into Attleborough, and there found a Mr. Armington, who had also been a member, but had attended no meeting for a number of years; he went into Seekonk, and there found Deacon French, an aged and infirm man, who had been to no place of worship for a long time, but had formerly been one of Mr. Snow's deacons; and in the town of Providence, he found William Eddy, who had been a member of Mr. Snow's church, but had withdrawn himself and gone with Elder Cornell.

Two or three of these four men agreed to attend what was called a meeting of the church, on a day which was appointed for the purpose. They came according to the appointment, and voted to receive Calvin Park, a professor in Brown University, and Paul Jewett, a tutor in the same institution, into the church, provided they shall procure a dismission from the churches of which they were members, and unite themselves to the church in Providence. They obtained dismission, and became members of the church."

"The congregation under Mr. Williams' ministry, slowly but constantly increased, until the number who commonly attended his meeting was from four to six hundred; the members of the church were about one hundred, with an unusual proportion of occasional communicants; and a greater number of the students in the college attended his meeting than at any other place of public worship. Mr. Williams never attempted nor desired to obtain hearers from other societies; for it was his opinion, that such persons, as were of any worth, were needed in the societies, to which they belonged; and that it would be no benefit to gain persons of a different character.



Mr. Williams had no definite compensation for his services ; one year, for eight months, he went from house to house for his food, without a single dollar, during that time, for his labors. He had a small room, in which he lodged and studied. His clothes were washed by Phillis Fitch, a colored woman, who afterwards went to Africa, under the direction of the Colonization Society, and died within a year from the time she left Providence. She was born and bred in Pomfret, in the family of Schuyler Putnam, a son of Gen. Israel Putnam. She was a pious and worthy woman, and became a member of the church, while Mr. Williams was their minister.

Mr. Williams continued in Providence, without installation or regular settlement, until the 7th of April, 1816. At that time he renounced his connection with the church and people in that town, on account of the constant opposition to his ministry ; chiefly through the influence of Abner Kingman, who declared that he had been tormented by his preaching nine years, and that he would no longer bear it.

During Mr. Williams' ministry the church adopted the covenant, the doctrinal articles, and the articles of discipline, which they have since retained, and took the name of the Pacific Congregational Church ; and the society which was incorporated in the year 1808, was called the Pacific Congregational Society. While Mr. Williams was their minister, Massa Basset made an organ, which he offered the society, to be used in the public worship of God, and which they accepted, against the avowed sentiments and decided judgment of their minister.

When Mr. Williams left the society, they were free from debt, and owned in pews and other possessions some amount of property.

In July, 1816, Willard Preston was installed pastor and teacher of the Pacific Congregational Church and society. They gave him, at first, six hundred dollars a year ; and some part of the time more than that sum. He was, for a little time, very popular with his people and in the town. But difficulties and contentions soon arose in the church and continued and increased, until a part of the church, with advice of a council, withdrew and formed a new church, by the name of the Calvinist Congregational Church. They had for their minister



Calvin Park. They held their meetings in a hall on Pine-street. Mr. Preston was dismissed in 1821, leaving the church, under the evil effects of the contention and disorder, that had existed during his ministry ; and the society, enfeebled and embarrassed with debts. Under these troubles, they who had acted with Mr. Preston, and particularly Abner Kingman, who had been chosen a deacon in the church, applied to Mr. Williams for counsel and assistance. On the 2d of July, 1821, he began to supply the pulpit which he had formerly filled in Providence, and in November of that year moved with his family to that town. There he continued to preach, until the 5th of August 1823. The society then, through the influence of Abner Kingman, rejected his services and refused, under the control of the same man, to assign any reasons for their conduct ; nor would they consent that Mr. Williams should be heard by the councils who were called for his dismission. Mr. Williams' offence chiefly consisted in the measures which he took for the re-union of the church, which had been divided by Mr. Preston's ministry.

After Mr. Williams' second removal, Elam Clark was ordained pastor and teacher of the church and people, and continued in office about a year. After his dismission Albert Judson was employed by the Pacific Society in the ministry of the gospel, about two years, without any installation. While he was there, in August 1825, most of the members, who had been divided during Mr. Preston's ministry, became united, under the name of the Union Congregational Church. The church at that time had 88 members.

On the 12th of December 1826, Thomas Tileston Waterman, was ordained rector of the church. In the year 1827 the society built the meeting house now standing on Richmond street. When the house was dedicated, the church and society changed their name, and have since been called the Richmond-street Congregational Church and Society.

Mr. Waterman was dismissed on the first of January 1837.— Charles Turner Torrey was ordained in the month of March, the same year, and remained there almost a year. In December, 1838, Willis Lord was installed and continued in the ministry nearly two years. After his dismission, their next pastor was Jonathan Leavitt, who was installed November 1840 ; and re-



mains with that church and people, until this day, 28th April, 1842."

The choice of pastor has always been with the church, the society having a negative on their choice. The expenses of public worship are defrayed by a tax on the pews. The church now (1842) consists of about 300 members. It is independent, but is associated with and forms a part of the Rhode-Island Consociation of Congregational Churches.

The author is indebted to Thomas Williams, for the greater part of the foregoing sketch.

#### FIRST METHODIST CHURCH.

In answer to the circular before referred to, the author received from A. D. Sargent, in 1836, a memoir of the rise and progress of Methodism in Providence. This memoir is so full, that little more has been done than to adapt its phraseology to the preceding parts of this work. In making out that sketch, the writer referred to the records of the church, and to the recollections of its aged members. The first clergymen of the Methodist Episcopal Church who visited Providence and preached, were Freeborn Garrettson and Jesse Lee. The time of their first visits cannot be ascertained. After them there were many who occasionally called and preached in the town. Mr. Ashbury, Superintendent of the Methodists in America, preached here in June 1791. In 1798, Joshua Hall came to this place, tarried a few months, taught a school, and preached on Sunday evenings, and occasionally at other times.

On the 24th of November, in the same year, he



organized a church, and formed a class for regular meetings. The church consisted of only five persons. Meetings have been kept up regularly, from this time ; but there was no regular preacher until after some years. The first baptism by a Methodist clergyman, was on the first day of May 1801. The clergyman was Joseph Snelling, and the person baptized, Diadama Tripp. On the 28th of August following, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered for the first time, at which were present five male and seven female members. John Finegan was the officiating clergyman. The first quarterly meeting was holden in the Town House, on the 12th and 13th days of August 1803. George Pickering preached on that occasion. In the spring and summer of 1804, Erastus Kibby preached in the Town House. So few attended his meetings, that he became discouraged, and told one of our citizens now living, he was tired of preaching to the walls. In July 1815, Van Rensalaer Osborn came to this place, and preached in a school house near the corner of Pleasant and Middle-streets. His preaching was attended with great and good results, and by the middle of September, the church numbered thirty-three members. He met with great opposition, and had many and great obstacles thrown in his way, yet the society increased to such a degree that they deemed it expedient to undertake the erection of a house of worship. Mr. Osborn obtained about \$500 for this purpose, by subscription. Encouraged by this, the society purchased a lot and erected a meeting house thereon,



at the corner of Aborn and Washington-streets. It was dedicated on the 8th day of June 1816. The church then consisted of 111 members. Mr. Osborn was stationed over the church by the Annual Conference. In February 1817, a board of trustees was incorporated by the General Assembly, to hold the house and lot in trust for the Methodist Episcopal Church, in the same manner as all the meeting houses of that church are holden. When first erected, it was designed to have the seats free. In a short time it was found expedient to pew the house and rent the pews. Solomon Sias was stationed here in the years 1817 and 1818, and Moses Fifield in 1819. In 1820, Bartholomew Otheman became pastor of the church. He remained here two years, during which time the church and society increased so much, that the house was found too small to accommodate them. They therefore resolved to erect a new house, and a suitable lot for it, at the junction of Chestnut and Clifford-streets, was generously given to the society by Daniel Field. The old house was disposed of, and subsequently converted into a dwelling house. The corner stone of the new house was laid on the 6th day of August 1821, and the house dedicated on the first day of January 1822. This, like the first, is built of wood. It is sixty-five by seventy-five feet on the ground, a gallery around three sides of it, and a large and commodious room under the east part of it, used for evening and conference meetings. A steeple and bell have been since added.

Timothy Merritt followed Mr. Otheman in the



care of the church, and in 1823 and 1824, Enoch Mudge was stationed here. In 1825, Daniel Webb succeeded Mr. Mudge, and was followed by Asa Kent, Jacob Sanborn, David Kilburn, Jotham Horton, Jacob Sanborn again, Aaron D. Sargent, Daniel Fillmore, Abraham D. Merrill, and David Patten, Jr., according to the custom of the Methodist church, the last of whom was stationed here in 1841. Notwithstanding the church set off a part of its members in 1833, to form the Power-street church, and a part withdrew in 1841, to form the Fountain Street Wesleyan Society, the number of its members, in 1837, was 293, and in 1842, about 400. The congregation usually assembling in this house, is very large and respectable.

All the current annual expenses of the society have, from its first establishment, been paid by the voluntary subscriptions and contributions of its members. They are attached to the great body of the Methodist Episcopal church in the United States, agreeing with them in doctrine and church discipline. All the preachers that have been stationed over this church, since 1816, are, with their wives, now living in 1842; a remarkable circumstance. It is questionable whether the statistics of any other denomination could present a similar one.

#### PINE STREET, OR SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH.

The Pine street or Second Baptist Church, was organized on the first day of May 1805. Its first members were Jeremiah Rose, William West, Benjamin Ham, William Ham, Samuel Gorton, Reuben



Burke, Chace Webb, Laban Lake, Thomas Reynolds, Nancy West, Frances Gorton, Mercy Webb, Sarah Lake, Abigail Jenks, Lillis Paul and Rachel Mason, most of whom had been members of the First Baptist Church. Joseph Cornell became the pastor, at its first organization. He was a native of Swanzey, Mass. born February 11, 1747. He was ordained in Lanesborough, Mass. in 1780, after which he devoted himself to the work of the ministry to the end of his life, in 1826, with a zeal and faithfulness rarely equalled. With a very limited education, and entirely self-taught, he possessed such sound common sense and such a thorough knowledge of the springs of human action and passion, as enabled him to catch and hold the attention of his auditory, and make most deep and lasting impressions on their minds. He resigned the pastoral charge of this church in November 1811. From this time till October 1812, the church had no pastor. Elisha Cushman preached for them a part of the time. In October 1812, Daniel Lewis became pastor, but resigned his office at the end of a year. The church were again without a pastor until December 1814, when Luther Baker, assumed the pastoral care. He resigned his office in May 1822.— In December following, Peter Ludlow commenced preaching to the church. He was ordained in August 1823, but in consequence of ill health, resigned his charge in September following, and removed to Georgetown, S. C. James N. Seaman became pastor in December 1825, and relinquished the office in August 1828. In October fol-



lowing, Phiarcellus Church became pastor. The church accepted his resignation in July 1834. In September following, John Blain commenced his labors as pastor of this church. He remained with it until the close of the year 1836. Soon after, the church succeeded in obtaining the services of J. S. Maginnis, who was, however, compelled to relinquish his charge, by ill health, in less than one year, and accepted the professorship of Theology, in the literary and theological institution at Hamilton, N. Y. After continuing for several months without a settled minister, the church and society invited the present pastor, John Dowling, then of New-York city, who entered upon his labors in this city in January 1839. Under the ministry of Mr. Dowling, the church has received large accessions, and now numbers about 500 communicants.

The church, from its first organization, until July 1806, worshipped with the Congregational society now known as the Richmond Street Congregational Society, in their old meeting-house on Richmond street. Mr. Cornell, before referred to, had been engaged, before the organization of this church, to preach for that society in this house, they being then destitute of a pastor. When the Congregational society obtained a minister of their own order, the Baptist church removed to "the Old Town House," under Mr. Cornell, as their pastor. This was in July 1806. In March following, they purchased the site on which their present meeting house stands, and erected a meeting house of wood on it, in the course of the same spring, which was dedicated to



the service of Almighty God, in June. The funds for erecting this house, were raised by subscription and sale of pews. In "the great storm" of September 1815, this house was swept from its foundations by the tide, and wholly destroyed. It will be remembered as a plain unassuming structure. For some time after its first erection, the water, at spring tides, flowed under a considerable part of the house. What is now known as Dorrance street, was then nothing but a dock, extending nearly to the line of Weybosset street. The water flowed over this dock, almost every tide, and at its ebb, disclosed the reason which obtained for it the name of Muddy Dock.

After the loss of this house, the church held meetings in the academy in Aborn street, and subsequently in the brick school house, then standing near Chestnut street. They immediately took measures for the erection of a new house. Two of their members were appointed to visit some of the principal cities and towns in the United States, and solicit aid for this work. They succeeded in obtaining about \$4,000. The new house was dedicated in November 1816, and cost, when completed, about \$10,000, the balance of which was paid by the sale of pews. It was a wooden structure, measuring fifty by seventy feet, and containing seventy-eight pews, besides those in the galleries. The tower extended just above the roof of the house. The steeple was added subsequently, and in 1837 the house was enlarged to its present size, fifty by eighty-five feet. It now contains one hundred and six pews, with large accommodations for evening



meetings and other purposes, under the main body of the house. It is now an ornament to the city.

The society obtained a charter of incorporation in February 1817, which was amended in February 1831, and the name changed from "the Second Baptist Society," to that of "the Pine Street Baptist Society." Previous to the last date, the salary of their pastors was raised by voluntary subscriptions, and since then, by tax on pews, a power to assess which tax, was given by the amended charter. The church forms a part of the Warren Baptist Association, but is strictly independent. By the charter, the power of appointing a pastor is given to the society, but is at the same time limited to such person as the church shall select.

#### THIRD BAPTIST CHURCH.

In preparing a sketch of this church and society very great assistance has been derived from a communication from William C. Barker. Not only his facts but his language also, will be generally adopted.

The congregation first associated, as a distinct worshipping assembly, in 1820. After meeting a number of times, they withdrew from the First Baptist Church, and formed themselves into the Third Baptist Church in Providence. The church at first consisted of fourteen individuals, nine males and five females. Among the most prominent of these were George Dodds and Isaac Peck. They at first adopted a written creed, but subsequently, in 1828, laid it aside, taking the holy scriptures as the only rule of faith and practice.



Allen Brown was the first settled pastor. He entered upon his duties in December 1821, and was ordained in January following. He retained the office of pastor, till January 1828, when he resigned it. From January to November 1828, there was no settled pastor over the church. On the first sabbath in November 1828, William Phillips engaged in the duties of pastor, which duties he discharged, to the satisfaction of church and society, until November 1836. He was succeeded by Joseph A. Warne, in February 1837. Mr. Warne's connexion with the society terminated at his request in January 1838. He was succeeded by Miron M. Dean, and he by Thorndike C. Jameson, who is the present pastor.

The number of the members of the church in 1837, was 195. Since then it has received many additions, the number in 1842, being about 450. The church acknowledges no obedience due to any other body on earth. It is strictly independent. It is however connected with the Warren Association of Baptists. The pastor is usually chosen by concurrent vote of church and society, although the society have no power of controlling the church in that matter.

The church met for worship first, in private houses. Afterward they purchased a lot of land on Tockwotton plain, and commenced erecting a meeting-house upon it in 1820. The house was completed, and dedicated to the service of God, on the 29th day of June 1822. It was of wood, forty-five feet by fifty, with a convenient room in the basement. The funds necessary to erect this house were



obtained partly by subscription and contribution, and partly by sale of the pews. The house underwent very considerable alterations, after its first erection. In 1832 it was lengthened twenty-four feet, and raised two and a half feet, making it forty-five by seventy-four feet. A cupola-steeple and bell were also added. Since then the house has been farther lengthened, and is about forty-five by ninety-nine feet.

The society received a charter of incorporation in June 1832. The whole expense of public worship was at first raised by subscription, and so continued until within a few years, when the pew owners consented to subject their pews to taxation, for that purpose.

The church and society has always had munificent benefactors, who from their abundance, contributed much, but over and above them all, should be borne in remembrance George Dodds. Of humble fortune, and past the period of life when he could hope to add to it, Mr. Dodds devoted himself to the service of this church and society from its commencement. His unostentatious piety, secured him the esteem and love of all who knew him, and many gave their mite to this society for the sake of the good old man who solicited it. Long may he be remembered. That small canvass bag which he carried so long, ready to receive the offerings of all to aid in erecting this church, should be esteemed an invaluable relic. Others did well, but he exceeded them all.



## THE FOURTH BAPTIST SOCIETY.

A number of gentlemen residing in the northerly part of Providence, met on the 26th day of April, 1820, for the purpose of consulting, on the practicability of erecting a house of public worship, in their vicinity. Benjamin Peck, was the chairman, and Samuel Thurber, clerk of the meeting. They appointed a committee to select and purchase a suitable lot for the purpose, and to open a subscription to raise sufficient funds to carry their design into effect. On the fifth of June, this committee reported, that they had purchased a lot, and collected by subscription, nearly enough to pay for it. They advised the appointment of another committee to solicit subscriptions toward the erection of a house. Dexter Thurber, Stanford Newel, Asa Pike, Samuel Thurber, Enos Angell, David Cole, Consider Miller, Holden Pearce, Esek Esten jr. and Joseph Veasie, were appointed this committee, with full power to take such steps to attain the great object in view, viz. the erection of a meeting house and the establishment of a religious church and society, as they might think most expedient. Among the earliest steps taken, was the procuring of a charter of incorporation, which was granted by the General Assembly at their October session, A. D. 1820. This differs from most charters for similar purposes, as it includes fundamental articles of government agreed upon by the society, touching not only the disposal of the property of the society, but the creed of the church which should assemble within the society's house. These last provisions breathe a spirit above



all sectarianism. They resolved that the meeting house shall be a Baptist meeting house, as a majority of persons engaged in the erection of it were Baptists, and they assumed the name of the Fourth Baptist Society. This is all the sectarianism in the charter or agreement, and this is neutralised in a very great degree, by a subsequent article which declares, that no subscription to any creed, article of faith or covenant, shall be required to constitute any person a member of said society, or of the church which may meet in their house, and that no person shall be required to make any confession of faith, other than a belief in the scriptures of the old and new testaments.

The first meeting under the charter, was holden on the 28th day of May 1821. Among other things, they then appointed Dexter Thurber, Enos Angell, Jabez Gorham, Peter Daniels, and David Cole, a committee to superintend the erection of their meeting house. The house was completed in the summer of 1822, and was dedicated on the 26th day of August. It is a wooden structure, forty-seven by sixty-seven feet on the ground, and containing sixty-eight pews, with a projection, thirteen by thirty feet, supporting the steeple, which is ninety feet in height, and is furnished with a good bell. It is a well proportioned building, and neatly finished both inside and out, being an ornament to that part of Providence and doing honor to the persons who planned and carried the project into execution. The cost of the house exceeded six thousand dollars. Donations to the amount of \$611 were received



from sundry persons not members of the society. The sale of the pews yielded more than \$4,500. In January 1825, the society received the grant of a lottery from the General Assembly, from which they realized two thousand dollars.

The first settled pastor over this church and society, was Zalmon Tobey. He was invited to that place in February 1823. Previous to that time, their pulpit had been temporarily supplied, by various preachers. Mr. Tobey continued his connexion with the society until April 1833, when he was dismissed at his own request. He was succeeded by Peter Simonson, who continued pastor of the church until October 1836, when having received an invitation to become the agent of the New-Jersey Baptist State Convention, he requested and received a dismission from his pastoral charge.

Thomas B. Ripley soon after accepted an invitation from the church and society to become their pastor, and continued to fulfil the duties of that office until August 1840.

Their present pastor, Francis Smith, commenced his labors among them on the first of January 1841, and was ordained on the 30th of March following.

The compensation of the pastor, and all the expenses attending public worship, have been defrayed by tax on pews and voluntary subscription. The power of choosing and settling pastors is in the church and society. The present number of church members is one hundred and ninety-seven; the congregation usually assembling for worship exceeds three hundred.



The following remarks were written by one of the members of the church, and are inserted by particular request :

“In the summer of 1835, a discussion arose in the church, in relation to the terms of communion ; which resulted in the passage of a resolution to invite “all members of evangelical churches, in good standing, who have been buried with Christ in Baptism,” to a seat at the sacramental board.

The adoption of this measure, by the church, gave offence to some of the friends of the society, who believed that one of the most important articles of its charter, had been rendered void. The church, however, still continued to occupy the house, and have done so up to the present time ; and a committee was some time since appointed by the society, to petition for an alteration of the charter.

The introduction into that instrument, of the article which declares that “no subscription to any creed, article of faith, or covenant, shall be required, to constitute any person a member of said society, or of the church which may meet in their house,” and that “no person shall be required to make any confession of faith, other than a belief in the scriptures of the old and new Testaments,” was effected by men who were, beyond all question, the true friends of liberty, both civil and religious. It is believed, however, that in the adoption of this measure, they overlooked one important feature in the constitution of a church of Christ :—the fact that the only real bond of union, among the members of such a body, is love. In all other organized bodies, men may act together effectively, without being influenced by this feeling ; but the prosperity and influence of a church are exactly in proportion to the sincerity and fervency of the affection which the members feel for one another, and for their Great Head. This principle alone can hold them together, and enable them to act together ; and this is their distinctive badge : “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” This being the case, how useless must it ever be, to attempt, by legislative enactments, to bind together, in the form of a church, individuals who differ entirely in their



views of religious doctrine ; and how vain to expect that men will labor, in concert, and with their whole hearts, for the support and for the promulgation of truth, who can never agree in regard to " what is truth."

Measures like this, so far from being promotive of religious freedom, are, in fact, calculated to perpetuate religious thralldom, inasmuch as they compel men either to labor for the promotion of what they regard as error, or to refrain from acting in the defence, the support, and the propagation, of that which they believe to be truth.

The question, " how can two walk together, except they be agreed ?" has been conclusively answered by the history of this church. During the first thirteen years of its existence, it was obliged to struggle hard for life, encumbered as it was, by a principle, which, however beautiful in theory, was found to be ruinous in its practical influence. But no sooner did it resolve to abandon the attempt to live under such circumstances, and to take a stand upon the broad and sure " foundation of the apostles and prophets," than it began to thrive ; and, from that time to the present, has enjoyed uninterrupted prosperity, the number of its members having been increased nearly three-fold, while its influence in the region where it is situated, and the amount contributed for the support of the various benevolent operations of the day, have been augmented in something like the same proportion."

#### FIRST UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY.

The answer of Mr. Balch, pastor of the Universalist Society, in 1837, to the circular before referred to, has furnished most of the facts, and much of the language, which will be used in the sketch of that society.

In the autumn of 1772, John Murray came to this town, bearing a recommendation from General James M. Varnum to Nicholas Brown. He preached in Mr. Snow's meeting-house. He visited this



town occasionally, for many years after this, and preached in such places as could be procured for him. After Mr. Murray, Elhanan Winchester, Adam Streeter, Richard Carrique, and various others, preached occasionally to those professing a belief in the salvation of all men through him "who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." These meetings were usually holden in the "Old Town House," but no regular preacher was employed, till after the organization of a society in 1821. On the 16th of February 1821, a subscription paper was circulated and signatures procured for the purpose of organizing an Universalist society. Their first meeting was holden at the court house, on the 10th day of April 1821, and the following persons were present, viz. Rufus Waterman, Charles Harts-horn, Oliver Carpenter, Esek Eddy, Jeremiah Fenner, Sion Fenner, William A. Smith, Samuel W. Wheeler, Thaddeus Curtis, William Olney, Benjamin Snow, Rhodes G. Allen, Dutce Roberts, James Anthony 2d, John Lassell, James Stetson, Lucius Dyer, Henry Brickley, Asa Ferguson, Nehemiah Arnold, James W. Mitchell, John F. Sheldon, Calvin Thomas, William Calder, John Martin.

At this meeting, it was "resolved, that we will form ourselves into a religious society, to be known by the name of the First Universalist Society in the town of Providence, and that we will receive into our body such persons of good moral habits, as choose to associate with us." The subscription paper circulated for signatures began thus: "We the subscribers, believing in that gospel which God



preached to Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed, do hereby," &c. This was the creed or covenant under which the society was organized, and it has not since been altered. Rufus Waterman was chosen President, Oliver Carpenter, Treasurer, and Samuel W. Wheeler, Clerk. An act of incorporation was obtained in October 1821, on the petition of fifty-three members.

On the 7th of December 1821, Fayette Mace, of Strong, (Me.) was invited to the pastoral care of the society. He entered upon his duties, the following spring, and continued to discharge them, until January 1823, when he took his leave of the society and returned to Maine.

February 17, 1823, David Pickering, of Hudson, N. Y. being invited to become pastor of the society, accepted the invitation and entered upon his labors as such, on the second sabbath in May following. He was installed June 4, 1823. He continued with the society, until the first sabbath in October 1835, when he removed to New-York, having previously asked and received a dismissal. Nov. 30, 1835, William S. Balch, of Claremont, N. H. was called to the pastoral charge of the society, which call he accepted and entered upon his duties on the 5th day of March 1836. Having accepted a call from the city of New-York, he took his leave of the society in November 1841. Henry Bacon, of Marblehead, Mass. succeeded him. He is the present pastor, having been installed March 17, 1842.

The society resolved, the 22d day of October 1821, to erect a house of public worship on the lot



which they purchased of Nathan Mathewson, at the corner of Westminster and Union streets. The corner stone of the edifice was laid, with appropriate religious ceremonies, on the third of June 1822. A silver plate deposited in the stone bears this inscription.

“The First Universalist Society in Providence, was incorporated by an act of the General Assembly of the State of Rhode-Island, at their October session 1821. The corner stone of this edifice, designed for the service of Almighty God, through his son Jesus Christ, was laid by Rev. Fayette Mace, on the 3d June, A. D. 1822. John H. Greene, architect, Caleb Mosher, Zachariah Chafee, joint master-builders. The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice. Ps. xcvi. 1.”

The house was built of stone. It contained one hundred and twenty-eight pews, cost upwards of \$20,000, and furnished conclusive evidence of the good taste, talents and skill of the architect and master-builders.

The money expended in the erection of this house was raised by subscription among the society; each subscriber being allowed, in pews, the amount of his subscription. This house, with several other buildings in the vicinity, was destroyed by fire on the evening of the 24th of May 1825. The fire originated on the opposite side of Union-street, in a cabinet maker's shop, then occupied by Rhodes G. Allen. The society held a meeting the day after the destruction of their house, when it was “voted that the society will immediately build a new house for



public worship, provided sufficient subscriptions can be obtained," &c. June 4th, it was "voted unanimously, that we build a new house for the public worship of Almighty God, on the foundation of the old house recently destroyed by fire." The corner stone of this house was laid by David Pickering, with appropriate religious services. It was completed at an expense of upwards of \$24,000, and dedicated on the 29th day of December 1825. The cost of this house was defrayed as the cost of the former one had been, with the exception of some private donations, and about six hundred dollars, raised by collections taken up by the Universalist Societies in Portsmouth, N. H. Boston and Gloucester, Mass. This is a handsome Roman-Ionic brick building, containing one hundred and twenty-two pews on the floor, with a handsome steeple, furnished with a good bell and clock.

The original mode of raising money for the support of public worship, was by voluntary subscription; but the charter of the society was so amended in October 1832, that a tax upon the pews, not exceeding five per cent. on the original appraisal, may be levied for that purpose, and the money has been thus raised ever since. The whole power of choosing, settling, and dismissing pastors, rests solely in the society, which acknowledges obedience to no other power save the Great Head of the church, which is his body the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. It is strictly independent. There were, in 1837, ninety-seven members of the society. The congrega-



tion usually assembling for worship, ranges from 500 to 600.

There is a church formed in connexion with the society. It requires no profession of faith, except a belief in Almighty God and his Son Jesus Christ. Each member takes the Bible as his creed, and covenants with the church, to walk in the statutes of the Lord, blameless. All believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, whether public professors or not, are respectfully invited to communion. The church claims no authority in the settlement or dismission of a pastor, nor control over its members, further than admonition and dismission for unchristian conduct. It meddles not with the peculiar sentiments of its members, any of whom can withdraw at pleasure.

#### CHURCH OF ST. PETER AND PAUL.

A few Catholics in Providence, and a few in the vicinity, in the year 1827, demanded the spiritual care of a priest. Robert D. Woodley, was sent to them by Benedict Fenwick, the Catholic Bishop of New-England. Mr. Woodley continued to attend to their spiritual affairs until 1830, when John Corry succeeded him in the pastoral charge. At that time the number of Catholics was from 150 to 200. During Mr. Woodley's time, they held their religious exercises in Mechanics' Hall. Soon after Mr. Corry assumed the charge, the civil authority of the town granted them the use of the "Old Town House," which they used four or five years. In January 1832, Mr. Corry purchased the lot of land upon



which the Catholic church of St. Peter and St. Paul was subsequently erected. In November 1832, Mr. Connelly succeeded Mr. Corry, who was then stationed in Taunton. At that time, the Catholics numbered about 300. In a short time, they greatly increased in numbers, owing to the rail-roads then in the course of construction in the vicinity. In May 1834, Mr. Lee succeeded Mr. Connelly, and held the pastoral charge for three years and a half, being occasionally assisted by Messrs. Lynch, McNamee and Mills. The Catholics then numbered about one thousand. In 1836, in July, the foundation of the church of St. Peter and St. Paul was laid. But little progress was made in the building that season, through want of funds. The work was, in fact, wholly discontinued from October 1836, to September following. At the last mentioned date Mr. Corry was again stationed in the city, and re-commenced the building, and had it closed in, by the first of December, when religious exercises were held in it for the first time. In the course of the following summer, the interior was more decently fitted up for divine service. At the Christmas of 1838, Messrs. Philip Allen & Son presented the church a fine toned, Spanish bell, weighing about one thousand pounds. A sweet toned organ was placed in the church in 1841. The whole expense of the lot, church, organ, and church furniture, was about \$12,000. The church covers an area, ninety-eight feet by forty-four. It is thirty-four feet high, having a fine basement story, in which are two good school rooms. The walls of the house are built of slate



stone, covered with cement. It is a castellated gothic structure, with a tower, of fine proportions and finish.

As early as 1813 or 1814, the Catholics celebrated mass in a small wooden building then standing on the north side of Sheldon-street, about one hundred feet east of Benefit-street. Public service, according to the rites and ceremonies of that church, was performed there for nearly a year. The building then occupied was a small one, which had previously been improved as a school house. It was subsequently removed from this lot, and blown down in "the great gale" of 1815. Bishop Cheverus occasionally officiated in this chapel.

#### WESTMINSTER CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY.

In January 1828, a number of individuals professing Unitarianism, associated themselves together under the name of "The Religious Association." Subsequently, one of the deacons and fourteen of the members of the First Congregational church, having been at their own request dismissed from that church, united with this association and formed what has since been known as the Westminster Congregational society. They first met for public worship in the "old tin top" meeting house, on Richmond street. In 1829, they erected, at an expense of \$35,000, a handsome and spacious church, on the west side of Mathewson street, of the Ionic order of architecture, containing one hundred and six pews. The walls are of stone, covered with cement. There is no church in the city which is more



chaste in its style of architecture, or which exhibits more classic taste in its exterior, than this. The funds for building this house were raised by subscription and sale of pews.

Frederick A. Farley was the first pastor of this church. He was ordained September 10, 1828.—He resigned his charge in July 1841, and was succeeded by the present pastor, Samuel Osgood, who was installed December 29, 1841. The pastor is chosen and settled by the society. The expenses of public worship are raised by tax on pews. In June 1828, the General Assembly granted a charter of incorporation to the society. The church has no written creed, but only a written covenant. The number of church members in 1842 was between 40 and 50. The church is strictly independent.

#### GRACE CHURCH.

The parish of Grace church was organized in May 1829. It consisted of about forty families, or two hundred persons, including thirty-one communicants.

In December 1836, the congregation had increased to about 140 families, and 261 communicants. During the first year, this parish was supplied by the neighboring Episcopal clergymen. Samuel Fuller, jr. officiated from May 1830, to April 1831, George F. Hawkins a part of the year 1832, and John A. Clark from October 1832, to October 1835. He was succeeded by the present (1842) rector, Alexander H. Vinton.

The society first met for worship in the old Con-



gregational meeting house, at the corner of Pine and Richmond streets, known as the "old tin top." In the year 1832, they purchased the Providence Theatre, at the corner of Westminster and Mathewson streets, and converted the same into a commodious place of worship. It is now a very handsome Gothic building, with appropriate tracery on the windows and doors, and is an ornament to that part of the city. It contains one hundred and ten pews; but the society has increased so much, that they will soon be compelled to abandon it, for one of more ample accommodations. The expense of the purchase and alteration of this house was raised by subscriptions and sale of pews. The parish received a charter of incorporation, in June 1829. Public worship is supported by a tax on pews and income of the funds of the society. It was originally established according to the doctrines, rites, and usages of the Protestant Episcopal church of the United States. The power of calling a minister, resides in the vestry, the corporation having the liberty of nominating.

#### ROGER WILLIAMS BAPTIST CHURCH.

In December 1829, a number of persons belonging to different Baptist churches, judging it expedient to have a congregation for public worship, on Christian Hill, procured a private room on High street, for their accommodation, and engaged William C. Manchester, for their minister. On the 22d day of March 1830, twelve persons, eight of whom were from the Six Principle Baptist church in Scitu-



ate, two from that in Coventry, one from that in Cranston, and one from that in Johnston, assembled at their usual place of worship and associated themselves together as a church, under the name of the Roger Williams Christian Hill church, now known as Roger Williams church. Agreeably to the practice of the churches, to which the members of the newly constituted church previously belonged, they subscribed to no written creed or covenant, but receive the holy scriptures, as furnishing every article of necessary belief, and teaching them their duties to one another and to all men. There was however, a mutual understanding, that, with slight exceptions, the doctrines set forth in a treatise on Doctrine and Practice just published by the General Conference of the Freewill Baptist denomination, were taught by the scriptures. Their numbers continuing to increase, in June 1831, they petitioned for a charter of incorporation, which was granted them under the name of the Roger Williams church of the Six Principle Baptists in Providence. The church and congregation continued to occupy their hired room until 1832, when they removed to a school house on Battey street, a few rods north of High street. Soon after obtaining their charter, they commenced building the house they now occupy on Burges street. It is a wooden structure, 70 by 45 feet, on the ground, with a handsome steeple and a bell. It was dedicated on the 25th day of December 1833. The funds for erecting the house were obtained, partly by private subscription, and partly by sale of the pews. The charter gives power to



tax the pews for repairs of the house, but all the expenses of public worship, are raised by contribution. The church united with the Rhode-Island and Massachusetts Conference, of the Six Principle Baptists, in September 1830. That Conference in September 1835, received a charge against the church of using instrumental music in public worship. The matter was referred to a committee, to examine into the same and to deal with the church in relation thereto. Upon a hearing before the committee, the church admitted the charge, and attempted to justify it.—The committee, not agreeing with the church, passed a vote of censure on them and excluded them from their communion, while they continued the use of musical instruments in public worship. Upon being informed of this result, the church protesting against the power of the Conference to delegate the powers exercised by their committee, resolved to withdraw from the Conference. In May 1836, an attempt was made to connect this church with the Warren Association of Baptists, but it was ineffectual, owing to dissimilarity of sentiments, on some points. They remained, therefore, wholly independent and disconnected with any other body of Christians whatever, until May 1837, when they united with the Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting of the Free-will Baptists, still maintaining the peculiarities of the old Baptists, excepting strict communion.

The congregation, during the first year, consisted of from 30 to 60 persons. Since then, it has been gradually increasing. After passing through vari-



ous and severe trials, the church is now in a prosperous condition. The congregation varies from two to four hundred, generally rising two hundred, and the number of communicants in the church is 130.—“As a church, they are utterly opposed to slavery and intemperance, and all things that tend to these: yet to abolish these with every other evil, they choose to call no man, or class of men, Master, but steadily to follow that course they judge to be pointed out to them by the Word, Spirit and Providence of God.” July 7, 1837, Elder Manchester was dismissed from the church as a minister and member. September 30, 1837, L. D. Johnson, of Boston, Mass. became their pastor, and was installed, an unusual ceremony with the connection. Their next pastor was Arthur A. Caveno, of Strafford, N. H. who continued with them a year. Their present pastor is James A. McKenzie, of Newport, R. I. who commenced his labors with them May 1, 1840.

#### THE PAWTUXET STREET CHRISTIAN SOCIETY.

A church of this denomination of Christians, was organized here more than thirty years since, but for want of a pastor, its members soon became scattered, and the church extinct. In the winter of 1833-4, a few individuals associated together, and invited ministers from abroad to visit and preach to them. Their meetings were holden at private houses. As their numbers increased, and a greater interest became manifested in their meetings, they engaged Elijah W. Barrows, of Connecticut, for a pastor, and established their meetings in the old meeting



house of the present Richmond Street Congregational Society, standing at the corner of Pine and Richmond streets. This was in April 1834. Their numbers were still small, the congregation varying from forty to eighty persons. The church was organized in July of the same year, and consisted of nineteen members. In November, they commenced the erection of a small chapel for their accommodation, upon a lot of land at the corner of Pawtuxet and Fenner streets, which they hired for the purpose. It was completed so as to be dedicated to religious service, about the first day of January 1835. The cost of the building was \$1000, which they raised by sale of pews. Elder Barrows continued with them until April 1837, when he was dismissed, at his request. After a few months, Edward Edmunds, of New-York, was engaged to succeed him. He was ordained elder of this church in November. The church and congregation increased very rapidly under his charge. In the summer of 1838, they enlarged their chapel, so that it could accommodate over two hundred and fifty persons. They purchased the lot at the northwest corner of Pawtuxet and Fenner streets, in 1839, and removed their house on to it. Mr. Edmunds resigned his office in April 1840, and Benjamin Taylor, formerly of Massachusetts, but more recently of Michigan, succeeded him in June following, and continued with them one year. During this time, the congregation increased very much, so that their chapel would not accommodate them. In July 1841, they broke ground for a new chapel, forty-



seven by seventy feet. It was soon completed, at a cost of \$10,000. It contains eighty pews on the floor, with an orchestra and side galleries, and will accommodate at least seven hundred persons. The cost of this, as well as of their first chapel, was raised by sale of pews. John Taylor, formerly of Massachusetts, but recently of Portsmouth, R. I., became pastor of this church and society in June 1841. The church now consists of upwards of two hundred members.

In settling a pastor, the church recommends, but the power of election is in the society. The pastor's salary, and all the expenses of public worship, are defrayed by monthly subscriptions and collections. The church is strictly independent in its government, and for its creed, takes the holy scriptures as their only rule of faith and practice. The society was incorporated in 1834, under the name of "The Pawtuxet Street Christian Society."

#### MEETING STREET BAPTIST CHURCH.

This church occupies the house formerly known as the African Union Meeting and School House. It was built in 1819, upon a lot on Meeting street, given to them by the late Moses Brown. The design, in its erection, was to establish a building in which all the colored people of Providence might assemble for public worship, and in which a school could be kept exclusively for their children. The work was undertaken without any reference to sectarian differences among them, and was approbated by most of the clergymen in Providence, and by



professing Christians of all denominations. It was vainly supposed then, that denominational distinctions might be buried, among this class of people, and they be induced to forego their own opinions on religious matters. At first, they proceeded with much unanimity. They raised about five hundred dollars, among themselves, and their agent, Nathaniel Paul, was successful in obtaining subscriptions for their aid, in other places which he visited for that purpose. In April 1819, they commenced the erection of a wooden building, fifty feet by forty, with a large room in the basement, appropriate for a school room. The school room was fitted for use in June 1819. Meetings were holden in it also till August 1821, when the upper part being finished, was dedicated to the service of Almighty God. The cost of the structure exceeded two thousand dollars; of this amount rising eight hundred dollars were subscribed by people of color. Much credit is due to the Rev. Henry Jackson for his active and zealous exertions in relation to this house. Perhaps it is not too much to say, that without them, it would not have been built.

The friends of the colored people who were engaged in this enterprise, were soon disappointed, for the same causes which have produced sects and dissonant creeds throughout Christendom, operated to divide and subdivide the colored people of Providence.

The churches of colored people now in Providence, generally originated and met first for worship in this house.



The friends of the original enterprise have by this circumstance, probably done more good than they anticipated. The great body of colored people are now divided into sects, having distinct houses of worship, while before 1819, they had no house of any kind, and probably would not have had, up to the present time, had it not been for this very movement.

A portion of the colored population still meet in this house, a part of whom constitute "the Meeting Street Baptist Church." They were first recognized as a regular Baptist church and congregation, on the 8th day of December 1841. The church then consisted of nine persons, seven males and two females. It has now increased to thirty-three. The congregation were about fifty in number. Jeremiah Asher, of Hartford, Conn. was then ordained their pastor, and has continued that relation up to the present time. At that time the members of the church entered into a covenant with one another, but they never have had any written creed. Their annual expenses are defrayed by voluntary subscription and contribution. The power of choosing and settling a pastor, is in the church and society. The church is strictly independent, acknowledging no obedience due from it to any other body on earth.



## CHAPTER EIGHTH.

### EDUCATION.

It is matter of regret, that education has not always received the same degree of attention in Rhode-Island, as in the other New-England states. Whatever may have been the cause, and several might be suggested were this the proper place, it must be admitted, that the soil of Rhode-Island has never been peculiarly favorable to schools, or institutions of learning. Providence has manifested more interest in them than the other towns in the state, yet we shall find little to boast of even in her case.

In May 1663, the proprietors passed the following order: "It is agreed by this present Assembly, that one hundred acres of upland and six acres of meadow (or lowland to the quantity of eight acres, in lieu of meadow) shall be laid out within the bounds of this town of Providence; the which land shall be reserved for the maintainance of a school in this town; and that after the said land is laid out and the bounds thereof set, it shall be recorded in our town records, according unto the bounds fixed, and shall be called by the name of the school lands of Providence." This is the earliest grant now to be found in the records, and the earliest reference to a school, or any means of education. From a petition



of John Whipple, jr. in the files of the city clerk's office, presented to the town January 28, 1684, it appears, that a whole purchase right of land, had long before that time, been set apart for the use and benefit of a school. The prayer of the petition was, that lands might then be laid out under it. It does not appear what was done with this petition, nor is there any mention on the records of the grant referred to in it, unless it is the grant first recited, and it would not seem probable that the petitioner could have confounded these grants, or misrecited the one intended by him, for he was town clerk in 1670, 1671, 1677, 1680 and 1681.

The first schoolmaster in Providence, of whom any memorial remains, was William Turpin. When he came, is not known, but he was here the 11th day of June 1684. On that day he executed an indenture with William Hawkins and Lydia his wife, in which he covenanted to furnish Pérégrine Gardner, with board and schooling for one year, for six pounds; forty shillings of which in beef and pork; pork, at two pence, and beef, at three-pence half-penny, per lb; twenty shillings in corn, at two shillings per bushel, and the balance in silver money.— He was to be instructed in reading and writing.— This instrument is in the hand writing of Mr. Schoolmaster Turpin, and exhibits plenary proof of his ability to teach writing. It also proves conclusively that schoolmasters in those days were not very exorbitant in their demands.

The following January, Mr. Turpin presented a petition to the town, in these words:



“The humble request of William Turpin, now schoolmaster of the said town, is, that whereas there was a parcel of land formerly granted by the ancestors of said town and was to be to the use and benefit of a schoolmaster, as by the records of the town book will more at large appear, which said order or grant was read to me in the presence of several gentlemen, that were the occasion of my settling at this town, who promised to be instrumental in the performance thereof. Gentlemen, my desire is, that the aforesaid land may be forthwith laid out, according to the said order or grant, and that the said master or his heirs may be invested in the said land, so long as he or any of them, shall maintain that worthy art of learning. Thus leaving it to you, gentlemen, to give a speedy answer, according as you shall think meet, I rest yours to command, WILLIAM TURPIN.”

There is no memorandum what answer, if any, was returned to this petition. How long the petitioner “maintained that worthy art of learning” does not appear. It was to him, as it ought always to be to those who engage in it, the stepping stone to honors, if not to fortune. In 1722 and 1723 he represented the town in General Assembly; in 1727, he was town clerk; and died, town treasurer, in 1744. He held the last office from 1722 to 1736, and was again elected to it in June 1743. He died in 1744, and before April.

In January 1696, John Dexter, William Hopkins and others, petitioned the town for a piece of land on Dexter’s lane, or Stamper’s hill, on which to erect a school house. The petition was granted, and there our information ends. Dexter’s lane is now called Olney street.

When the proprietors divided the land lying on the west side of North and South Main streets, into warehouse lots, they left a lot opposite the west end



of the court house parade, for a school house lot. The first reference to it, is on the plat of the warehouse lots in the proprietor's office, bearing date in 1747. How long before this date, the lot was set off for this purpose, whether it was set off in pursuance to the grant referred to in Mr. Turpin's petition, or in answer to the petition of John Dexter and others, cannot be ascertained. Nor can it be ascertained when a school house was first erected on it. The first notice I have been able to find of it on the town records, is in 1752. In that year, Nicholas Cooke, Joseph Olney, Esek Hopkins, Elisha Brown and John Mawney, were appointed "to have the care of the town school house, and to appoint a master to teach in said house." The school committee the following year, were Nicholas Cooke, John Mawney, Nicholas Brown, Elijah Tillinghast, and Daniel Abbot. The next year, the school house was leased by the town to Stephen Jackson, schoolmaster, for three months from March 1st. There is no further reference to the matter until 1763, when the town clerk was directed to lease the house again. The schoolmaster probably received all his compensation from his pupils; the town, as a corporation, simply furnishing a room at a fixed rent. There were at least two other schools in town, as early as 1763. Mr. George Taylor, in 1735, had the use of a chamber in the state house, to keep a school in; and in 1751, Gideon Comstock, Alexander Frazier, Joseph Potter, Thomas Angell, James Field, Barzillai Richmond and Nehemiah Sprague, had permission to build a school house on the west



side of the river, "on vacant land a little above Joseph Snow jr's dwelling house, the street being wide enough." They stated they had then subscribed enough to erect a house. The location of this house must have been near the public pump in Broad street. After the court house was burned, in 1758, the town endeavored to possess themselves of the lot on which it had stood, in lieu of the one on Main street. There were great difficulties in the way, the court house lot having been originally granted only for the use of a colony house, and the school house lot, only for a school house. The difficulties were, however, overcome, and in February 1765, a committee of the town transferred the fee of the school house lot, and purchased the other.

In 1767, the town again took up the subject of education, with the apparent design of providing schools for all the children of the inhabitants. At a town meeting holden December 8, they resolved to purchase or build three school houses for small children and one for youth, to provide instructions and pay the expense from the treasury, and these schools to be under the supervision of a school committee. John Brown, John Jenckes, Nathaniel Greene, Charles Keene and Samuel Thurber were appointed a committee to select locations for the houses, to purchase land and make contract for their erection. Darius Sessions, Samuel Nightingale, Jabez Bowen and Moses Brown were appointed to prepare an ordinance for the building, supporting and governing the school. These committees reported to an adjourned meeting, holden on the first of January 1768.



The record states, the reports were both rejected. Neither of them is on file or recorded. That made by the last named committee, in the hand writing of the late Gov. Bowen, I have lately found, accompanied with a memorandum in the hand writing of the late Moses Brown. They are as follows :

“The education of youth, being a thing of the first importance to every society, as thereby the minds of the rising generation are formed to virtue, knowledge, and useful literature, and a succession of able and useful men are produced, with suitable qualifications for serving their country with ability and faithfulness; and, institutions of this nature are the more useful, by how much the more liberal and free, the enjoyment of them is.

This town having taken the same into consideration at their last meeting, held the 2d day of December last past, voted to purchase and erect three small school houses, for the education of children, and one larger one for the education of youth, and that proper masters should be provided and keep for each house at the town's expense.

Upon consideration whereof, be it enacted by the town of Providence, and by the freemen of the same it is hereby enacted, that four school houses be erected or purchased, within the compact part of this town, as soon as may be. That one be purchased, or a new one built, on the west side of the great bridge, at or near the place where the school house at present stands; that one be erected at the southerly part of the town, in the back street, near Power's Lane; that one other one be built at the northerly part of the town, in the back street, near Richard Brown's lot; and that one larger one be erected on the lot where the old court house formerly stood. The three small ones not to cost more than three hundred pounds, lawful money; to be built of wood, and pretty near the form and dimensions of that one over the great bridge already built.

And be it further enacted, that the large school house to be built on the old court house lot, shall be built with brick, according to the plan presented to this meeting by the committee, and that the finishing and completing the same, shall not exceed



the sum of four hundred and eighty-five pounds lawful money, and that the same shall be finished on or before the first day of December, next after this date. And whereas, there is a sum of money, in the hands of the town's committee, which arose from the sale of the old school house and lot, be it further enacted, that the whole of the said sum of money be appropriated towards building the several school houses that are to be erected at the town's expense.

And be it further enacted, that this town will take the remainder of the expense that shall accrue by building the several school houses, on itself, and that the town will from time to time, and at all times hereafter, supply said houses with good and sufficient masters, at all times to come, and that fire wood shall be supplied said schools at the town's expense.

And be it further enacted, that the sum of five hundred and twenty pounds, lawful money, be assessed and levied on the polls and estates of the inhabitants of this town, on or before the first day of February next, and that the same be collected and paid into the town treasury, by the collector of taxes on or before the day of next, to be applied for defraying the expenses, providing materials, and building the said four school houses.

And be it further enacted, that the following rules, orders and regulations, shall be observed in the governing the said schools, that is to say :

That the school house already built on the west side of the great bridge, shall remain under the direction of the present proprietors, till such time as all the other houses shall be finished, and fit for the reception of scholars ; that then, all the four houses shall be furnished with masters at the expense of the town.

That a school committee shall be annually chosen, of persons dwelling in different parts of the town, who are hereby clothed with ample power and authority, from time to time, to appoint masters and ushers, in all or any of the schools, fully qualified to do the duties of their respective stations, to agree with each for their several salaries, and to pass certificates to the town treasurer, for their receiving the same ; which agreements, in writing, shall be obligatory on the town, at all times, and said committee's certificates thus passed, shall be a sufficient warrant to the treasurer for his payment of said wages.



And further, in case of any complaint to said committee against any of the masters or ushers, as to insufficiency, neglect, partiality or misconduct, said committee for the time being, are required to take the same into immediate consideration, and act thereon as shall to them seem just and right, either for the acquittal or removal of said masters or ushers, and the appointing of others, in his or their room, or stead. That any repairs or alterations that may be at any time hereafter thought needful in said houses, shall be laid before said committee, and be by them inquired into, and if found fit, and reasonable, shall be laid before the town for them to act and determine upon.

That every inhabitant of this town, whether they be free of the town or not, shall have and enjoy an equal right and privilege, of sending their own children, and the children of others that may be under their care, for instruction and bringing up, to any or all of the said schools. And that each and every scholar, before they be admitted into any of the small schools, shall have learnt their letters and acquired some acquaintance with spelling. And before they be permitted to enter the larger school, they must have gained considerable knowledge in reading and writing, and that all those who may be thus qualified, shall and may be admitted to all the advantages of education that may be taught in either of the respective schools. And in case any dispute should arise, touching the qualification of any child or children, the same shall be determined by the school committee.

That not exceeding two hours in each day, shall be taken up in the large school, in perfecting the scholars in reading, accenting, pronouncing and properly understanding the English tongue. That the remaining school hours shall be employed in teaching the children and youth in writing, arithmetic, the various branches of mathematics, and the learned languages. The whole to be taught in one or separate apartments in said house under the direction of said committee, as the circumstances of said school, from time to time shall require, and as will have the best tendency to increase and spread knowledge and learning.

That children under the care of non-resident freeholders, shall be admitted into said school, provided said freeholder shall pay



the sum of twelve shillings, lawful money, in the school tax annually; and also those inhabitants of the town who pay twelve shillings, lawful money, annually, to the support of the school, if they have no children nor apprentices of their own, shall have liberty to send the children of any friend or relation of theirs living out of this town.

That the masters in each school, during the common school hours, shall be obliged to give a constant attention to the duties of their offices, and not engage in any employ, that might impede the due instruction of the youth under their care, and also that they keep up in their several departments, a strict, but not passionate and severe, discipline. And for the raising a laudable emulation to excel in the various branches of learning, said masters shall, from time to time, range the scholars in proper classes, according to their several attainments, annually or quarterly, and those that excel in learning in each class, shall have some honorary marks of favor or distinction, conferred on them by the master.

The committee for the time being, shall be the visitors to the said schools, to inspect the conduct of the several masters, and the proficiency of those under their charge; their visitation to be made quarterly at least.

That none shall be received into the schools from other towns, when the numbers are so large in the schools, as that the proficiency of those that belong to this town may be obstructed; but when there is sufficient room in any of the houses, children may be received in from any other towns, on the approbation of the committee, they settling what sums of money shall be paid by the parents or guardians of such children, for the supporting of the schools, receiving the same and passing of it to the town treasury."

"1768. Laid before the town by the committee, but a number of the inhabitants (and what is most surprising and remarkable, the plan of a Free School, supported by a tax, was rejected by the poorer sort of the people) being strangely led away not to see their own as well as the public interest therein, (by a few objectors at first) either because they were not the projectors, or had not public spirit to execute so laudable a design, and which was first voted by the town with great freedom. M. B."



The like strange and surprising result has been seen in almost every community which has refused to establish free schools. Another committee reported at the same time that there were then 102 houses, 911 inhabitants (including 189 between the ages of 5 and 14) fit for schooling, on the west side of the river.

The votes of the meeting holden December 2d, were in effect repealed, by the rejection of the reports of the committees, and the town at this meeting resolved to build one brick school house, thirty feet by forty, and two stories high, near the court house, out of the proceeds of the old school house lot sold in 1765, and a tax of £100, provided the sum of £182,17 should be raised by private subscriptions for the same object. The probability is, that this was equal to the proceeds of the old school house lot and the tax of £100. In the house so built, the town agreed to support a free school, to be under the direction of a committee of nine, of which the town council were to be *ex officio* members.— The attempts to raise the sum required by subscription failed, and the town met again on the subject, on the first day of February. It was then voted, to apply the proceeds of the old school house lot to the erection of the school house on the old court house lot, so far as they would go, if individual proprietors would contribute what would be sufficient with that to complete the house; the house so built to be kept in repair by the proprietors, and the town to have the use of the lower story. In case this arrangement could not be completed within thirty



days, the town's committee were instructed to erect so large a house as they could, with the proceeds of the old lot and house. The subscription was not filled within the limited time, but by the middle of July it was, and John Smith was appointed to build the house which now stands on the lot. The town had the ownership of the lower story, and the proprietors, of the upper. Subsequent to this, the town frequently appointed masters to keep school in their part of the house, and passed rules and regulations, for the good government of both the schools kept in it. A school committee were also frequently appointed, which visited these schools occasionally, and also the other private schools kept in the town.— Things continued in this inauspicious state, until 1785. It would seem that the town had then become more sensible of the disadvantages of being joint owners of a school house with individual citizens and of being co-partners in the business of education, with any one. At any rate, they found a deficiency in benefits received. In April, they appointed a committee, to draw up a plan of education for the government of the several schools in the town. This committee soon discovered, and in July reported, the causes of ill success. They say :

“ They have endeavored to suggest some general outlines for the regulation of schools, as they are now supported by individuals, but are of opinion, that no effectual method can be devised for the encouragement of learning and the general diffusion of knowledge and virtue, among all classes of children and youth, until the town shall think proper to take a matter of so much importance into their own hands, and provide and support a sufficient number of judicious persons for that purpose.”



The town were not, however, willing to adopt the measure proposed. They still pursued the half-way, vacillating course, worse, in fact, than no municipal action on the subject. They appointed a school committee, to have the government of the town school houses, to appoint masters and give directions for the government of schools kept in them, and to take charge of such other school houses in town as the proprietors should resign to them. The proprietors of the school houses had become convinced of the inexpediency of individuals' being interested in school houses, for the accommodation of common schools. Those interested in "the brick school house," agreed, at once, that if the town would put and keep that building in repair, they should have the use of it for two years, provided they would keep up a school in it for one year. Previous to this time, another set of proprietors erected another school house near the north end of Benefit street, the wooden building which stood there in 1828, and then known as the first district school house. Its original name was "Whipple Hall." They also offered the use of their house to the town, for a public school, for a reasonable rent, the town keeping it in repair. The town accepted the charge of these houses on these terms. They also set apart all moneys which should be received of the state, or the United States, for damage done "the brick school house," during the revolutionary war; all rents to be received for Market-house cellar, chambers and stalls, and all wharfage to be received on the market-house lot, as a fund for the support of public



schools. It is not probable that this arrangement lasted long, or that much good grew out of it. The funds set apart for the purpose were quite too small. They might have been, and probably were, mostly consumed in keeping the houses in repair, and paying the rents demanded. The result of the arrangement then, would simply have been, the establishment of public schools, which all might attend who would pay the tuition demanded by the instructors. This seems probable, from the fact that afterwards, in 1791, some of the citizens petitioned the town to establish free schools. The petition was referred to the school committee. They reported in August, that it is expedient to purchase the proprietors' interest in "the brick school house," and also in "Whipple Hall," and build two new houses, one at the south end of the town, and the other on the west side of the river. They recommended that the schools so established should be under the care and supervision of the school committee, who should appoint the necessary instructors. There was one very singular provision in the report, which almost reconciles us to the fate which it met with. It is stated that the Friends then had a school of their own, in which their children were instructed, and would continue to be instructed, without expense to the town. The report recommended that they should be permitted to draw from the town treasury, money to support their school, in proportion to the number of children attending it. It would have been indeed humiliating, if public education had been subjected to evident sectarian influence, by the descendants of



those who had first severed all connexion between religion and civil government. The town directed the interests of the proprietors in the two school houses to be purchased. This was not then effected, and the matter was permitted to slumber from August 1791, to September 1792, when the town again resolved to establish free schools, and directed the town council to carry into effect the report of the committee of August 1791. How fully do these proceedings abound in good resolutions! The town council did nothing more than the school committee the year before, toward the establishment of free schools. The next year, the town authorised the school committee to make some arrangements with the proprietors of the "brick school house," so that the interior of the building might be altered. In 1794, and after that, frequent directions are given for the repair of this house, and for the drawing up of regulations for the schools, but nothing more about free schools. In September 1795, the town again resolve to establish "schools for the free education of the children of the inhabitants of the town, and that the expense of supporting the same be defrayed out of the town treasury." The report of the school committee made in August 1791, was revived, and the town council were again directed to carry the same into effect. Like all previous movements on this subject, the passage of these resolutions ended the matter.

In 1800, commenced a new era in the annals of education in this state. During this year, the General Assembly passed their first act in relation to



schools, the object and design of which was to establish free schools in every town. The subject was brought before them by the following memorial and petition of the Providence Association of Mechanics and Manufacturers, drawn up by John Howland :

“ That the means of education which are enjoyed in this state, are very inadequate to a purpose so highly important :

That numbers of the rising generation, whom nature has liberally endowed, and suffered to grow up in ignorance, when a common education would qualify them to act their parts in life with advantage to the public, and reputation to themselves :

That in consequence of there being no legal provision for the establishment of schools, and for want of public attention and encouragement, this so essential part of our social duty is left to the partial patronage of individuals, whose cares cannot extend beyond the limits of their own families, while numbers in every part of the state are deprived of a privilege which it is the common right of every child to enjoy :

That when to that respect, which, as individuals we feel ourselves bound to render to the representatives of the people, we add our public declaration of gratitude for the privileges we enjoy as a corporate body, we at the same time solicit this Honorable Assembly to make legal provision for the establishment of Free Schools, sufficient to educate all the children in the several towns throughout the state. With great confidence, we bring this our earnest solicitation before this Honorable Assembly, from the interest we feel in the public welfare, and from the consideration that our society is composed of members, not originally of any one particular town, but assembled mostly in our early years from almost every town in the state :

That we feel as individuals, the want of that education which we now ask to be bestowed on those who are to succeed us in life, and which is so essential, in transacting its common concerns. That we feel a still greater degree of confidence, from the consideration that while we pray this Honorable Assembly to establish Free Schools, we are, at the same time, advocating the cause of the great majority of children throughout the state,



and in particular, of those who are poor and destitute—the son of the widow, and the child of distress :

Trusting that our occupation as mechanics, and manufacturers, ought not to prevent us from adding to these reasons an argument which cannot fail to operate with those, to whom is committed the guardianship of the public welfare, and that is, that liberty and security, under a republican form of government, depend on a general diffusion of knowledge among the people.

In confiding this petition and the reasons which have dictated it, to the wisdom of the Legislature, we assure ourselves that their decision will be such, as will reflect on this Honorable Assembly the praise and the gratitude, not only of the youth of the present generation, but of thousands, the date of whose existence has not commenced."

This petition was presented to the February session, 1799, and the whole subject was referred to a committee, who reported in June, by bill. The bill was printed and referred to the freemen for instruction. The instructions given by Providence were as follows :

"To John Smith, William Rhodes, Thomas P. Ives, and David L. Barnes, Esqrs.

Gentlemen—Placing in you the fullest confidence, we have selected you to assist in the public councils of the state, not doubting your readiness to promote such measures, as may tend to advance the general interest, as combined with the private happiness of the people. It never being our intention to bind our representatives by instructions, in the ordinary business of legislation, we should not have addressed you at this time, but from the deep interest we feel in the question submitted by the General Assembly to their constituents. On the question of free schools, gentlemen, all party distinctions are broken down ; here there can be no clashing interests. On this subject one section of the state cannot be opposed to another. Before this benevolent idea, every partial, narrow motive of local policy must



disappear. As we are confident, that the general object of the bill can meet with no opposition, the only question which can arise, will be on some of its particular provisions, as to the best mode of carrying its general principle into effect. On this point of the subject, we would recommend to you to support the adoption of the bill in its present form, as any inconvenience which may arise in particular districts, can, at any time, be removed after the law is in operation, when experience can point out to the legislature, the expediency of a different arrangement; but this we confide to your discretion, on the positive injunction, that the general system is not affected.

Fully confident of the patriotism of our fellow citizens throughout the state, that they are actuated by the same anxious solicitude for the public good, we doubt not but their representatives and ours will meet at the next session, bringing with them, the rich deposit of the public sentiment, and, by a unanimous voice, establish Free Schools throughout the state; then will that glory, which attaches itself to the purest benevolence, and to the highest acts of public virtue, rest on their heads, and the members of the Rhode-Island Legislature, having thus before the close of the eighteenth century, provided for the full enjoyment of a right which forms so essential an article in the great system of social order, will be mentioned with high expressions of gratitude and honor, through the ages and generations which are yet to succeed. It is, nevertheless, the sense of the town, that, in case any particular alteration of the bill, to extend it to native Indians, or other people of color, or as it may respect any particular society, shall appear eligible, to the representatives on hearing before the General Assembly, these instructions are not to be construed to militate against any such amendment."

In October following, the House of Representatives passed the bill into a law. The Senate postponed the matter until the next February session, (1800) when they concurred with the House. It met with great opposition in the General Assembly, and measures were soon put in motion to ensure its repeal, by which its fair operation never was felt. The



end designed was accomplished, the act became unpopular, and was repealed in February 1803.

In prospect of the passage of this act, the town appointed a committee to purchase Whipple Hall, and the proprietors' interest in the "brick school house." This was effected with little difficulty. At the April town meeting, 1800, a committee, consisting of James Burrill, jr. Richard Jackson, jr. John Howland, John Carlile, William Richmond, John Corlis and Joel Metcalf, was appointed to devise a plan to carry the act of the General Assembly into effect. They exhibited a report recommending the establishment of four schools, to be kept up during the year; one to be kept in Whipple Hall, one in the "brick school house," one in a new house to be built at the south end of the town, and the other in a new house to be built on the west side of the river. They recommended that there should be a principal in each school, at a salary of \$500, and so many ushers or assistants, with such salaries as the town council should deem expedient, all whom should be appointed by the council. They proposed that the town should constitute one school district, under the act of the General Assembly. The main features of this report were adopted, and the details of the plan left to the council, who were also charged with the superintendence of the schools. A tax of \$6000 was ordered, which, with the other funds belonging to the town, were appropriated toward carrying the system into operation. The council immediately commenced their part of the labors.

Arrangements were soon made for the erection of



the new houses, ordered by the town. The one at the south end of the town, was located on Transit street, on the same lot now occupied by a school house, and the one on the west side of the river, near the corner of Friendship and Claverick streets. In July they appointed James Wilson, John Dexter, Moses Noyes and Royal Farnum, principals, and subsequently, Daniel Young, Lucius Bolles, Gravenor Taft, Ezra Leonard and William Morton, ushers or assistants, of these schools, two assistants being assigned to the school on the west side of the river. In August, the town appointed the first school committee under the act of the General Assembly. It consisted of Jonathan Maxcy, Enos Hitchcock, Stephen Gano, William Jones, James Burrill, jr., John Howland, Jabez Bowen, David L. Barnes, Amos M. Atwell and John Carlile. The powers of this committee were derived from the public school act and were very limited, the town council being invested with the general oversight, supervision and government of the schools. The council and school committee met on the 16th of October and adopted rules and regulations for the government of the schools, and shortly after, the council communicated to the principals of the schools, some further rules to be by them observed in the discharge of their duties. The preliminary arrangements being made, the schools were opened on the last Monday of October 1800, under very favorable auspices.— On the 23d of December there were attending in the school in the



First district, in Whipple Hall,	under Mr. Dexter,	180
Second " in brick school house,	" Mr. Noyes,	230
Third " south end,	" Mr. Farnum,	240
Fourth " west side,	" Mr. Wilson.	338

Subsequently, the school in the fourth district was divided, and a part put under a master without any assistant or usher at a salary of four hundred dollars per year, making the sum paid annually for the support of schools, for salaries alone, \$3,200. This continued to be the arrangement until 1812. It is matter of regret that the records furnish no data from which to ascertain the number of scholars in these schools during this period. That the number decreased after the novelty of the system had worn off, is quite probable. I have not been able, however, to ascertain the exact numbers, except in April 1803, and May 1804. At the first, the number was 708, and at the second, 736.

"From 1812 to 1818, there were five schools.—Five masters, at \$500 salary, also five ushers, at a salary of \$200, making the annual expenditure, for tuition alone, \$3,500." The number of scholars, it is supposed, was not increased much, if at all, during this period. In August 1818, the salaries of the ushers was raised to \$250. In the following year, a school house was erected on the west side of the river, on Pond street. The fourth district was then divided into two, and from this time to 1824, there were five masters at a salary of \$500, and five ushers at \$250, and the average number of scholars about 830. Thus they remained until 1828, with a slight variation, which will be hereafter noticed.

At the January session, 1828, the General Assem-



bly passed another act establishing public schools throughout the state. From the passage of the first act, (1800) the town of Providence had continued, as we have seen, to keep up public schools, notwithstanding the repeal of that act in 1803. After its repeal, the whole burden of their support rested on the town; and it was borne without murmuring. The poor and middling classes received, in the education of their children, much more than they contributed for the support of the schools; while the rich were amply compensated for their part of the expense, by the increased security which they enjoyed for their property, and the increased happiness they saw around them. Upon the passage of this law, which brought in the state to the pecuniary aid of the town, a vigorous attempt was made to increase the number, usefulness and standing of the public schools in Providence. The general act put the schools under the exclusive control of a school committee in each town. In June 1823, the first election was made under this law. The board consisted of twenty-one persons. A little time previous to the passage of this act, the town council had been obliged to divide the schools in two of the districts, the scholars being too numerous for accommodation in the school houses. This was the commencement of primary schools in the town. Previous to this, in all the districts, children of all ages, received instruction in all the branches taught. The monitorial system of instruction was established in one of the writing schools in 1828, to test its efficiency. It re-



mained for some years, and until its early friends were willing to have it changed back.

One of the first acts of the committee under the act of 1828, was the establishment of a primary school in each of the districts. It was soon found, that the numbers attending these schools would be quite too large for one instructress, and an assistant was added to each school. The salary of a preceptress was fixed at \$175, and her assistant, at \$100. The salaries of the preceptors and ushers of the other schools remained the same. A school for colored children was established in 1828, the master of which received \$400 per year; a primary was added soon after. The number of schools in the town, at the time of the adoption of the city charter, was twelve, five writing and five primary, and one writing and one primary for colored children—the amount paid for tuition, five thousand seven hundred dollars, and the average number of scholars for the last three years, about twelve hundred.

Since the adoption of the city charter great and permanent improvements and additions have been made to the schools, school houses, and system of public instruction. The schools have been increased to twenty-five, of the following descriptions: sixteen primary and secondary, six grammar, one high school, and two schools for colored children. Each primary school is under the care of a preceptress and one assistant; each grammar school under a master, and at least one male or two female assistants; and each school for colored children under a master or preceptress and one male



or female assistant. The high school is not yet opened, progress is made in the erection of the building for its accommodation. Its site is at the corner of Benefit and Angell streets. That will be under the care of a principal and one or more assistants. A superintendent, appointed by the school committee, has the general oversight and management of all the schools, school houses, estates and apparatus belonging to the public school establishment. The school committee consists of thirty persons, appointed in pursuance of the general school law of the state. The salaries paid to the superintendent and teachers are as follows:—To the superintendent, \$1250; and to the principal of the high school, \$1250; to each male assistant in high school, \$750; to each female assistant, \$500; to each master of a grammar school, \$800; to each male assistant, \$400; to each female assistant, \$275; to each preceptress of a primary and secondary school, \$250; to each assistant, \$200; to each master of a school for colored children, \$500; to each preceptress, \$200; to each male assistant, \$250; to each female assistant, \$150.

The whole expense of the public schools, for the year ending in June 1842, was \$16,649, of which \$5,057 42 was received from the state. The number of scholars receiving instruction during the last quarter of that year, was 3,805. The free school establishment, it is presumed, will not suffer by comparison with that of any other town or city in the Union.

It should not be supposed that all the means of



education which the children and youth enjoyed in this town, have now been enumerated. The fact is far otherwise. The corps of private instructors has always been large and respectable, so far as means are left to form a judgment on the matter. I did intend to append a list of such as had given or proffered instruction in Providence; but supposing that a bare list of names, and nothing more, would give little interest, have abandoned the idea. In 1739, six of the principal schoolmasters associated for the purpose of agreeing upon their charges for tuition. If this be the origin of the trades' union in this country, their successors did not learn from them the art of demanding extravagant wages for services rendered. They fixed the price of tuition in English, at fifteen shillings per quarter. In May 1767, a school for the instruction of young ladies in writing and arithmetic, was advertised. The school hours, from six to half past seven in the morning, and from half past four to six in the evening, would be deemed now quite as unfashionable as the price of tuition, two dollars per quarter. In 1808 and 1809, two academies were incorporated, under the names of the "Providence School Society," and the "Westminster School Society." Since then, other similar establishments have received from the public a liberal patronage. In October 1821, the number of academies and schools of all grades, was sixty-one, and the number of scholars attached to them, 2,805. In 1831, a similar examination was made, and the result showed eleven public schools, having 1,150 scholars, and fifty-six private schools, having 1,682



scholars; being, in all, 2,832, almost one thousand less than the number now attending the public schools only. The number of private schools has considerably decreased, since the new organization of the public schools.

#### FRIENDS' SCHOOL.

The institution in Providence, under the care of Friends, is called "The New-England Yearly Meeting Boarding School." Its object is to impart to the children of members of the society of Friends, a guarded education, embracing not only the more common branches of an English education, but extending also to the higher departments of the mathematics and classical studies.

The school was originally established and opened for the reception of scholars, at Portsmouth, Rhode-Island, in the year 1734. It was continued there four years, when, from want of sufficient encouragement, the school was suspended.

In 1814, Moses Brown offered to the acceptance of the society, the farm on which the school is now located, containing about forty-three acres of land. The erection of a suitable building was soon commenced. It consisted of a centre building, fifty-four feet square, three stories high, with two wings, each forty-two by forty-four feet, two stories high, and a basement story under the whole. Since then, the wings have been enlarged, so that they are now eighty-four by forty-two feet. Another building, forty by fifty feet, has since been built, two stories high above the basement. The wings of the first named building contain the school rooms and dor-



mitories of the students. The centre building is occupied by the family of the superintendent, and contains, also, the meeting room, library, &c. The building last erected, contains a spacious lecture-room, laboratory, and other public rooms. The philosophical apparatus is well selected and ample. The mineralogical collection probably surpasses that belonging to any similar institution in the state.

The location of the school is on the rising ground in the east part of the city. For salubrity and beauty, it could not be exceeded. The land is one hundred and eighty-two feet above tide water, and it is said that in a clear day, every town in the state, except New Shoreham, may be seen from the observatory on the centre building. The school was opened for the reception of scholars, on the first of January 1819, and has always received a liberal patronage.

Among the prominent benefactors of the school, may be mentioned Moses Brown, his son Obadiah Brown, and William Almy. Obadiah Brown bequeathed the institution \$100,000, the income of which is appropriated to its current expenses.

The number of scholars averages about 150 of both sexes. The price of board and tuition is \$60 per annum. At present, none are admitted but members or children of members of the Society of Friends. A committee appointed annually by the New-England Yearly Meeting of Friends, has the general direction of the school. The immediate care of it, is in two Friends, man and wife, who are called superintendents, and who exercise a general



parental care over the scholars. Four male and three female teachers, are usually employed.

#### BROWN UNIVERSITY.

The only university in the state is located at Providence. It was incorporated in 1764. The corporation is divided into two branches, that of the fellows, and that of the trustees. The number of the fellows is twelve, of whom eight, including the President, are required to be Baptists; the remaining four can be selected from any religious denomination. The trustees are thirty-six in number, of whom the charter requires that twenty-two shall be Baptists, five Friends, four Congregationalists, and five Episcopalians. Notwithstanding these provisions in the charter place the institution under the government of the Baptists, there are other provisions in the same instrument, which excludes sectarianism from the course of academical instruction. It prohibits the introduction of any religious tests into the institution, and declares that all the members of it shall "forever enjoy full, free, absolute and uninterrupted liberty of conscience," "and that youth of all religious denominations shall and may be admitted to the equal advantages, emoluments and honors of the college or university," "and that the public teaching shall, in general, respect the sciences; and that the sectarian differences of opinions shall not make any part of the public and classical instruction."

The institution was at first called Rhode-Island College. The name was afterwards, in 1804, chang-



ed to Brown University, in honor of Nicholas Brown Esq. late deceased, who was its most munificent benefactor.

The following sketch of the early history of this institution was drawn up by the Rev. Morgan Edwards, 1771, and is copied from a volume of his manuscripts in the Cabinet of the Rhode-Island Historical Society.

“Young indeed the institution is, and therefore short would its history be, had it received its existence, locality, endowment and permanency, like other institutions of the same nature ; but contrariwise, some peculiar circumstances attended each, which infer the interposition of Providence, and bespeak it to be a thing of God and not of man only. The first mover for it, 1762, was laughed at, as a projector of a thing impracticable. Nay, many of the Baptists themselves discouraged the design, prophesying evil to the churches, in case it should take place, from an unhappy prejudice against learning, and threatened, not non-currence, but opposition. Nevertheless, a young man, who is now at the head of the institution, went to Rhode-Island government, and made the design known. The reason of his attempt in this province, was, as has been observed, that the legislature is there chiefly in the hands of the Baptists, and therefore, the likeliest place to have a Baptist college established by law. The remainder of what I intend to say, on this head, shall be in the words of President Manning ; to which I shall add the history of the first charter by Daniel Jenckes, Esq., who both, for obvious reasons, think it necessary to have them published. President Manning’s narrative is as follows : ‘In the month of July 1763, we arrived at Newport, and made a motion to several gentlemen of the Baptist denomination, whereof Col. Gardner, the deputy governor, was one, relative to a seminary of polite literature, subject to the government of the Baptists. The motion was properly attended to, which brought together about fifteen gentlemen, of the same denomination, at the deputy’s house, who requested that I would draw a sketch of the design against the day following. That day came, and the said gentlemen, with other



Baptists, met, in the same place, when a rough draft was produced and read : the tenor of which was, that the institution was to be a Baptist one, but that as many of other denominations should be taken in, as was consistent with the said design. Accordingly, the Honorable Josias Lyndon and Col. Job Bennett were appointed to draw a charter, to be laid before the next General Assembly, with a petition that they would pass it into a law ; but the said gentlemen pleading unskilfulness, touching an affair of the kind, requested that their trusty friend, Rev. Ezra, now Dr. Stiles, might be solicited to assist them. This was opposed by me, as unwilling to give the Dr. trouble about an affair of other people. But they urged, that his love of learning and catholicism, would induce him readily to give his assistance. Accordingly, their proposal was consented to, and his assistance obtained, or rather, the drafting of the charter was left entirely to him, after being told that the Baptists were to have the lead in the institution and the government thereof forever, and that no more of other denominations were to be admitted than would be consistent with this. The charter was drawn, and a time and place appointed for the parties concerned to meet and hear it read. But the vessel in which I was to sail for Halifax, going off that day, prevented my being present with them long enough to see whether the original design was secured. And as the corporation was made to consist of two branches, trustees and fellows, those branches to set and act by distinct and separate powers, it was not easy to determine, by a transient hearing, what those powers might be. The trustees were presumed to be the principal branch of authority, and as nineteen out of thirty-five were to be Baptists, the Baptists were satisfied, without sufficient examination into the authority vested in the fellowship, which, afterwards, appeared to be the soul of the institution, while the trusteeship was only the body, and placing entire confidence in Dr. Stiles, they agreed to join in a petition to the Assembly, to have the charter confirmed by authority. The petition was presented and cheerfully received by the Assembly, and the charter read ; after which a vote was called for and urged, by some, to pass it into a law. But this was opposed by others, particularly by Daniel Jenckes, Esq. member for Providence, alledging that the Assembly required more time to examine, whether it was



agreeable to the design of the first movers for it, and, therefore, prayed to the house, to have the perusal of it while they adjourned for dinner. This was granted, with some opposition. Then he asked the Governor, who was a Baptist, whom they intended to invest with the Governing power in said institution ? The Governor answered, the Baptists, by all means. Then Mr. Jenckes showed him, that the charter was so artfully constructed, as to throw the power into the Fellows' hands, whereof eight out of twelve were Presbyterians, usually called Congregationalists, and the other four might be of the same denomination for aught appeared in the charter to the contrary. Convinced of this, Governor Lyndon immediately had an interview with Dr. Stiles, the Presbyterian minister of Newport, and demanded why he had perverted the design of the charter ? The answer was, "I gave you timely warning to take care of yourselves, for that we had done so with regard to our society ;" and finally observed, that "he was not the rogue." When the Assembly was convened again, the said Jenckes moved that the affair might be put off to the next session, adding that "the motion for the college originated with the Baptists, and was intended for their use, but that the charter in question was not at all calculated to answer their purpose ; and since the committee, entrusted by the Baptists, professed they were misled, not to say, imposed upon, that it was necessary the Baptists in other parts of the colony should be consulted, previous to its passing into a law, especially as few, if any of them, except himself, had seen it, and prayed that he might have a copy for the same purpose ; all which was granted. When the charter came to be narrowly inspected, it was found to be, by no means, answerable to the design of the agitators and the instructions given the committee. Consequently, application was made to the Philadelphia Association, where the thing took its rise, to have their mind on the subject, who immediately sent two gentlemen hither, to join with the Baptists of this colony, in making what alterations and amendments, that were to them specified before their departure. When they arrived, Dr. Ayres of Newport was added to the committee, and they, happily, drafted the present charter, and lodged it, with a new petition, in proper hands. The most material alterations were, appointing the same number of Baptists in the fellowship,



that had been appointed of Presbyterians, by Dr. Stiles, settling the Presidency in the Baptist Society, adding five Baptists to the Trustees, and putting more Episcopalians than Presbyterians in the corporation.'

Thus the Baptists narrowly escaped being jockeyed out of their college by a set of men, in whom they reposed full confidence. How the same party have acted since, will appear hereafter. I now proceed to the further history of the first charter by the said Daniel Jenckes, Esq.

"While I attended the business of the Assembly, held August 1763, Capt. William Rogers came to the council chamber and presented me with a paper, with the design that I should sign it, adding, "That it was a petition for a Baptist college, he knew I would not refuse." Business not permitting me to attend to him immediately, I requested he would leave with me the petition and charter; meanwhile, the sergeant made proclamation requiring the members to take their seats. In my seat, I began to read the papers, but had not done, before the petition and charter were called for, which I gave to the sergeant and he to the speaker at the board. The petition being read, a motion was made to receive it and grant the charter. After some time, I stood up to oppose proceeding immediately on the petition, giving my reason in words to this effect. "I understood that the college in question was sought for by the Baptists, that it was to be under their government and direction, with admission only to a few of other religious denominations to share with them therein, that they might appear as catholic as could be, consistent with their main design; but on the contrary, I perceived by glancing over the charter, while I sat in my place just now, that the main power and government and direction, is vested in twelve Fellows, and that eight out of the twelve are to be Presbyterians, and that the other may or may not be of the same denomination, but of necessity, none of them is to be a Baptist. If so, there is treachery somewhere, and a design of grossly imposing on the honest people who first moved for the institution, I, therefore, desire the matter may lie by till the afternoon." This was granted. In the afternoon the matter was resumed, with a seeming resolution, in some, to push it through at all events; but I had influence enough to stop proceedings



then also. That evening and next morning, I made it my business to see Governor Lyndon and Col. Bennett, and to inform them of the construction of the charter. They could not believe me, for the confidence they had in Dr. Stiles' honor and integrity, until seeing convinced them. What reflections followed, may be better conceived than published. However, we all agreed to postpone passing the charter into a law, and did effect our purpose for that session, notwithstanding the attempts of Mr. Ellery, and others of the Presbyterians, to the contrary. Before the breaking up of the Assembly, the house, at my request, directed the speaker to deliver the charter to me, after I had made a promise it should be forthcoming, at the next meeting of the Assembly. I took the charter to Providence and showed it to many who came to my house. Others borrowed it to peruse at home. Meanwhile the messengers from the Philadelphia Association arrived in Newport, which occasioned the committee of Newport to send to me for the charter. I asked for it of Dr. Ephraim Bowen, who had borrowed it last. The Doctor said he had lent it to Samuel Nightingale, Esq. Search was made for it there; but it could not be found; neither do I know, to this day, what became of it. When the next General Assembly met, on the last Wednesday in October 1763, the second charter was presented, which was much faulted and opposed by the gentry who concerned themselves, so warmly about the other, and one in particular, demanded that the first charter, which had been entrusted with me, might be produced. Then I related as above, that it was lost, and the manner, how it was lost, but the party, instead of believing this, very rudely suggested, that I had secreted the charter, and in the face of the court, charged me with a breach of trust, which brought on very disagreeable altercations and bickerings, till, at last, I was necessitated to say, that "if there had been any foul doings, it was amongst them of their own denomination at Providence." Their clamors continued, and we gave way to them that session, for peace sake. Meanwhile Dr. Bowen, who is a man of strict honor and integrity, used all means to recover the former charter, posting up an advertisement in the most public place in town, and making diligent enquiry, but to no purpose. At the next Assembly, which met in February, 1764, the new charter was again



brought on the carpet, and the same clamor against it and unjust reproaches against me, were repeated. It was said "that the new charter was not like the old, and was constructed to deprive the Presbyterians of the benefit of the institution." To which it was replied, "that it was agreeable to the design of the first undertakers, and if calculated to deprive the Presbyterians of the power they wanted, it was no more than they themselves had attempted to do to the Baptists." After much and warm debate, the question was put and carried in favor of the new charter, by a great majority."

This charter lay dormant for about two years, except that some nominated in it, did qualify themselves in order to become a corporation, and did open a subscription among themselves and choose Rev. James Manning to be President. But in September 1766, the tuition part of it was begun at Warren, by said President, who soon had eight or twelve scholars, which brought on the first commencement September 7, 1769. Before this, in February 1767, the Rev. Morgan Edwards, of Philadelphia, set out for Europe to solicit money toward the paying the salary of the President and Assistant, for hitherto we had no fund, and succeeded pretty well, considering how angry the mother country then was with the colonies for opposing the stamp act. Afterwards the Rev. Hezekiah Smith and others, gathered small sums in America for the same purpose, but after all the endowment is so scanty that the college is in arrears to the President, to this day, who has suffered considerably by it.

To the year 1769, this seminary was for the most part friendless and moneyless, and therefore, forlorn, inasmuch that a college edifice was hardly thought of. But Mr. Edwards making frequent remittances from England, some began to hope and many to fear, that the institution would come to something and stand. Then a building and the place of it were talked of, which opened a new scene of troubles and contentions, that had well nigh ruined all. Warren was at first agreed on as a proper situation, where a small wing was to be erected in the spring of 1770 and about £800 raised toward effecting it. But soon afterwards, some who were unwilling it should be there, and some who where unwilling it should be any where, did so far agree, as to lay aside the said location, and propose that the county



which should raise most money should have the college. That of Providence bid high for it, which made the county of Newport, which is jealous of Providence on account of trade, exert itself to the utmost. However, Providence obtained it, which so touched the jealousy and piqued the pride of the islanders, as to make many of them enemies to the institution itself. The same is too much the case with the other disappointed counties. Nevertheless, by the adventurous and resolute spirits of the Browns and some other men of Providence, the edifice was begun in May 1770, and roofed by the fall of that year. The next summer it was so far finished as to be fit for the reception of scholars. This college is allowed to be a neat pile of building and most pleasantly situated. The building is of brick, one hundred and fifty feet by forty-six, four stories high, exclusive of the cellar, which is partly above ground. In the middle on each side, is a projection of fifteen feet making the whole resemble a cross.—In one of these projections is the chapel, in the opposite, the dining room; above is the library, the apparatus room &c.—The chambers are fifty two in number, opening to large aisles, running the whole length of the building. Upwards of one hundred scholars may be here accommodated. The situation of the college is remarkably airy, healthful and pleasant, being the summit of a hill pretty easy of ascent and commanding a prospect of the town of Providence below, of the Narragansett Bay and the islands, and of an extensive country, variegated with hills and dales, woods and plains, &c. Surely this spot was made for a seat of the muses. The first commencement, mentioned before, was celebrated at Warren, September 7, 1769, whereat was a great concourse of people who openly professed their admiration of the performances of the young gentlemen and the regularity and decorum of the whole business of the day.”

After giving the names of the graduates at the first three commencements, and the names of the persons composing the corporation, Mr. Edwards remarks :

“I shall finish this appendix with a letter addressed to President Manning, whom the writer supposes to have expected the friendship and help of the Presbyterians, with respect to the col-



lege, had not the Baptists, in newspapers, complained of the oppression of their brethren in New-England, and threatened to carry those complaints to the throne in case they should be continued any longer ; at least, the writer supposes the President to have ascribed their present enmity against the college and industry to prevent youth from resorting thither, to those complaints and threatenings. Part of the letter is as follows :

‘I should not have ventured to oppose my opinions to yours, had not facts, recent facts, decided the matter in my favor ; and show that the goodness and candor of the president, have imposed on his judgment. Remember you not, the first charter ? While the Baptist college was yet in embryo, they very disingenuously opposed it as such, and contrived to make it their own, since which disappointment, Dr. Stiles would have nothing to do with it, though courted again and again to accept even a fellowship therein. And when the present charter was presented to the Assembly at South Kingstown, remember you not what clamor they raised against it there ? and what stout opposition they made to the passage of it, in so much that its friends thought it best to desist ? And how they triumphed afterwards ? And when the affair was brought on again at East Greenwich, the next session, you can never forget, with what heat and coarse expressions, the same oppositions were renewed, nor the mortification and murmurings which the passing of it occasioned. It is true, while the charter lay dormant, they remained easy, and, as you say, appeared well pleased when you had set it on foot at Warren. But the reason of that is obvious ; they knew, that while the college stood friendless and moneyless, as it then did, they should have the pleasure to see it fall, and to mock those who began to build a tower and were not able to finish it. But, seemed they good-humored when money came thither from Europe ? Or, did they not look as the man of Bristol did, at your first commencement, and put the same invidious construction upon every thing, that he did on the complaisance you showed him, that day. Their good affection toward the college edifice was but varnish ; for while with specious arguments they would have it here and anon there, and then, in another place, they were only working to prevent its being any where : and soon as it had a locality and the beginning of its



existence at Providence, did they not, with some misled Baptists, attempt to get another college, to destroy yours, and actually carried their design through the lower house? This also failing, what remains but to prevent youth from resorting to it. Their slandering the officers of instruction, as insufficient; the town where it is in, as a lawless place; the college, as wanting government; their representing it as a nest of Anabaptists, calculated to make proselytes; their visiting grammar schools and tampering with masters and parents; their scolding Presbyterian youth, when they enter with you, as your neighbor Rowley did, who is capable of nothing but what is gross and indelicate; their refusing to pay their subscriptions, &c.; are all intended to hurt what they could neither prevent nor destroy. Think you that their present opposition to the college is the effect of those newspaper complaints and threatenings of Presbyterian oppression in New-England? Why, then, did they oppose it before those complaints and threatenings had existence. Think you they will be friends should we desist from these complaints and court their favor? It cannot be, except God should once teach them to love their neighbors as themselves, and to do as they would be done by. Destroying the Baptist college will pacify them, and nothing else. The existence of that on the hill of Providence is a Mordecai in the gate. I told you, long ago, that if you could not do without the Presbyterians, you could not do at all. I need not inform you that I deal in generals. I except the honest, the trusty and the good, and some such Presbyterians I met with, in their connexions with this college. God send us more such, and mend the rest.'"

Mr. Edwards' intimate connexion with the institution in its infancy, must have made him well acquainted with the facts as they transpired; but it cannot be doubted, that his strong predilections and prejudices may have imparted a deeper coloring to some of his statements, than his impartial judgment would have approved. This remark may also be applied to the statements furnished Mr. Edwards by President Manning and Judge Jenckes.



In addition to the facts derived from the above named source, a few have been gleaned from other sources. The first draft of the charter referred to by Mr. Edwards, and supposed to be lost, is still in existence. It was recently found among the files and papers of the church over which Dr. Stiles presided. Where it was, when sought for in 1763, still remains involved in doubt.

The permanent location of the institution, it would seem, was made to depend upon the amount of subscription received in each county in the state. An advertisement inserted in the Providence Gazette, under date of January 12, 1770, and signed by three of the Fellows, states that the county of Newport had exceeded the other counties in the amount of its subscription. The corporation met on the 7th of February following, and by a vote of twenty-one to fourteen, decided that "the said edifice be built in the town of Providence, and there be continued forever." They broke ground for the building now known as University Hall, on the 26th day of March, and the corner stone of that building was laid by John Brown, on the 14th day of May following. The buildings of the institution in 1842, consisted of Hope College, Manning Hall, and Rhode-Island Hall, in addition to the one first built. These have been erected within a few years, and the first two by the late Nicholas Brown, the distinguished patron of the institution. His donations, at various times, including the legacy given in his will, do not fall short of \$100,000. University Hall and Hope College, are mostly occupied by the



students, while Manning Hall and Rhode-Island Hall, are appropriated to the use of the library and philosophical apparatus, including also a laboratory and lecture room.

One of the results of the location of this institution at Providence, was an application to the General Assembly, by another set of petitioners, for another college. At the February session, 1770, a charter for an academy and college, to be located in Newport, passed the lower house of Assembly, by twenty majority. The application was not favorably received in the upper house, where it was either rejected or indefinitely postponed. The minute-book of the Senate for that session, cannot be found, but it did not pass that body, for no mention is made of it in the records of the General Assembly.

Dr. Manning remained at the head of this institution as President, from its first organization until his death, in 1791. He was succeeded by the Rev. Jonathan Maxcy. In 1802, Dr. Maxcy resigned the presidency, and subsequently was elected president of Union College, Schenectady, which he afterwards resigned, and was chosen President of Columbia College, in South Carolina, which station he held until his death. The Rev. Asa Messer was elected President soon after the resignation of Dr. Maxcy. He held the office until 1826, when he resigned, and was succeeded by the present incumbent, the Rev. Francis Wayland, jr. In 1842, the board of instruction consisted of a president, five professors and three tutors. The number of under graduates was then about 170. The whole number



of graduates was about 1,500. The philosophical apparatus of the University will bear comparison with that of most of the Universities in the country. Its library contains 10,000 volumes, besides which, there are two societies, composed of undergraduates, having libraries containing 7,000 volumes. The necessary annual expenses of a student, including board, varies from \$112 to \$134 per year.

The following incident, kindly communicated by John Osborne, of Smithfield, is inserted to show that the discipline of the college, in its infancy, was quite as strict as that of any similar institution at the present time :

The late Judge Peleg Arnold, when about 18 years of age, in going to mill, heard as he approached Friend's meeting house at upper Smithfield, a great noise like the breaking in of windows, and being desirous of ascertaining the cause, rode up the hill to within about 20 rods of the house, when he discovered two young men on horseback each with a club, smashing in the front windows of the meeting house.

Immediately on seeing him they wheeled and rode off at full speed. He being a vigorous young man and determined to ascertain who they were in order to bring them to justice, threw his bag of corn in the road and started in pursuit. The race was a sharp one and continued for six miles, when the Judge came up with and stopped them on Cumberland Hill. After learning their names and places of residence, he permitted them to proceed. One of the young men proved to be a student in the college; and the President being informed of the circumstance, wrote to the Clerk of the Monthly Meeting the following letter :

Providence, December 12, 1770.

Sir—You may think strange that I, a stranger to you, should address you by this epistle, but will excuse me, when I give the reason, which is, an information that I have received,



that one Scott, a youth under my tuition, some time ago riding through Smithfield, (in company with one Dennis, of Newport,) rode up to, and, in a most audaciously wicked manner, broke the windows of the Friends' meeting house in said town, of which meeting I understand you are clerk. Upon the first hearing of this scandalous conduct, I charged him with the fact, which he confessed, with no small degree of apparent penitence: whereupon I thought good to inform you, and by you, the Meeting, that they shall have ample reparation of damages, and such other satisfaction as they shall think proper; being determined to punish with the utmost rigor, all such perverse youth as may be entrusted to my care, as I hold such base conduct in the greatest detestation.

You will be so good as to let me know when the first meeting of business is held, that I may send him up to appear before them, and make not only reparation, but such a confession before the Meeting as shall be fully satisfactory. I choose to mortify him in this way; and should be very glad that some of the heads of the Meeting would admonish him faithfully, and show him the evil of such doings, if this would be agreeable to them; but I speak this, not to direct them in the matter, but what would be agreeable to me. When this is settled, we shall discipline him with the highest punishment we inflict, next to banishment from the society; and with that, if he does not comply with the above.

The youth has been but few months under my care; is a child of a respectable family in Kingston, Massachusetts Bay, and had his school learning at New-Haven. I am sorry for his friends, and that it happened to fall to my lot to have such a thoughtless, vicious pupil: but am determined this shall be the last enormity, one excepted, of which he shall be guilty while under my care. I hope the Meeting will inform me how he complies with these injunctions, if they think proper to take these or any other methods. Please, by the first opportunity to favor me with a line in answer to the above requests, and you will do a favor to

A real friend,

JAMES MANNING

Mr. Thomas Lapham, jr., in Smithfield.



In reply to which, as requested, Thomas Lapham, jr. sent him the following letter :

Smithfield, the 17th of 12th mo., 1770.

Respected Friend—These may inform that I received thy letter of the 12th inst., concerning one of thy pupil's base conduct, in breaking the windows of our meeting-house, and agreeably to thy request therein, I hereby inform, that our meetings for business are held on the last fifth day of every month; so that our next will be on the last fifth day (or Thursday) of this instant, at the house where the windows were broken. A meeting for worship begins at 11 o'clock, and commonly holds two hours; then begins the meeting for business. Therefore, if the youth appear before us, I intend to send thee an account of his second progress. I am glad to hear such proper methods proposed for the settling of his scandalous deed—and that the affairs of the college may be so conducted as to be a means of promoting virtue and piety, which are far preferable to arts and sciences, is the real desire of one who wishes well unto all.

THOMAS LAPHAM, JR.

The young man, according to the direction of the President, appeared before the next monthly Meeting for business, and informed the Meeting what he had done, made a suitable acknowledgment, paid the damage done to the windows, received some wholesome admonition and advice, and returned to his college duties, it is to be hoped, a better man."

Our view of the means of education in Providence would still be incomplete, without some notice of Sunday schools. Originally designed as an eleemosynary institution, supported and carried on by private beneficence, they commend themselves to the favor of every philanthropist.

Sunday schools were at first established as a means of affording to children employed in manufacturing establishments, the means of gaining a portion of that education afforded, by common schools, to children not so employed.



The first in the United States, it is believed, was established by Samuel Slater, the father of cotton manufactures in this country, for the benefit of the children in his cotton mill in North Providence. This was in the spring of 1796. When the original object of Sunday schools becomes changed, and they are made a means of diffusing morality and religious instruction to the rising generation generally, then it is that they are deemed to deserve only qualified praise; for in a greater or less degree, sectarianism dictates the instruction given. It was in this stage of their existence, that Sunday schools were introduced into Providence. This was in March, 1816. The first school was established by the Methodists. In the course of two years after this, there were five schools here. Now, in 1842, the schools are increased to thirty, taught by nearly five hundred teachers, and containing about five thousand scholars.

Thus far our view has been confined to the necessary and useful branches of education. The ornamental deserve a word in passing. Before 1763, dancing had not been taught in Providence, by any professor of the art. The want of a professor in this art began to be felt as a serious evil. To remedy it, a correspondent in the Gazette, states the fact, and adds, what he believed to be another, that a competent teacher who could play his own fiddle, would meet with encouragement in Providence.— Every proposed improvement has always met with its opponents. A portion of every community, at all times, are satisfied with the wisdom and ways of their ancestors, or look upon every change, as be-



ing from bad to worse. So it was in this case.— This correspondent drew down on his head the ire of some such individual. It led to a long controversy, the opponents contending that a spinning school would be more profitable and useful. The dancing master came soon after this. There was a teacher of French here in 1773. The earliest teacher of instrumental music that I have been able to find was in 1784. It is not probable he was the first. Vocal music must have been taught very early. I can find no early trace of drawing or painting.

One other means of mental improvement still remains, and that is public libraries.

Before 1754, a number of individuals associated together to form a public library. The design met with due encouragement. A company was formed and a well selected and valuable collection of books bought by subscription. The state generously afforded the society the use of the council chamber in the state house for their library. The books were burned with the house, on the evening of December 24, 1758. The company received from the General Assembly the grant of a lottery, with the proceeds of which they replaced their lost library. After the present court house was erected, it was kept for many years in the senate chamber, and was in very general use. In progress of time, it became neglected. New works were not added to the collection, and the shareholders ceased to take that interest in it, which it deserved and which was necessary to keep any such institution in order. The want of new books, led to the formation of another



library. In June 1831, a company, composed in part of share holders of the Providence Library, applied to the General Assembly and received a charter of incorporation, under the name of the Providence Athenæum. They soon formed a very valuable library, mostly of modern works. In a short time, it was ascertained, that if the reading community would not support one public library, it would not two. The establishment of the Providence Athenæum, withdrew from the Providence Library a part of its patronage, and in its turn, the existence of the Providence Library kept from the Athenæum, patronage, which under other circumstances it would have received. In view of this, several members of both institutions met, and as a means of uniting both libraries, agreed to become members of a third public library company under the name of the Athenæum, which should swallow up the other two. At the January session of the General Assembly 1836, they obtained a charter of incorporation. It soon became, by purchase, the owner of the other two libraries.

In March 1836, Nicholas Brown and the heirs of Thomas P. Ives, offered to give the Athenæum a lot of land on the corner of Benefit and College-streets, for the location of a building, \$6000 towards the erection of a building thereon, and \$4000 for the increase of the library, provided other individuals would subscribe \$10,000 toward the building and \$4000 more for the library, before the first of June then next. The Athenæum found little difficulty in complying with these terms. The citizens of Prov-



idence were too much alive to the importance of the object in view not to avail themselves of the munificent offer. They broke ground for the building on the 4th of April 1837, and completed it in November. It is forty-eight feet front by seventy-eight deep, one story high with a basement. The front is of Quincy granite, hammered; the sides of rough ashler granite. The basement story is occupied by the Franklin Society, and the principal one by the Athenæum. A room was offered to the Rhode-Island Historical Society for the accommodation of their cabinet, but was declined. The accommodation of these societies, in addition to the Athenæum, was part of the original offer of the munificent benefactors. The building was designed by William Strickland, of Philadelphia. It cost, including the preparation of the lot, nearly \$19,000. The library consists of about ten thousand volumes of well selected and highly valuable books. The price of a share in this institution is so small, being only fifteen dollars, and the annual tax so light, being limited at five dollars, that almost any individual can avail himself of the advantages which it offers.

The time and study-saving machinery of public lectures, is, in Providence, a thing of comparatively modern invention. The present generation is accustomed to see the corners of the streets, at all times, covered with placards and handbills of itinerant lecturers, who for a small sum, in a very short time, and with no preparatory study in their hearers, promise to enlighten a promiscuous audience, in the deepest arcana of the most abstruse science.



The generation which preceded us had not the advantages of these railroads to scientific excellence. They had to delve through ponderous folios and quartos, each for himself, to acquire but a tithe of the knowledge which modern lecturers promise this more favored generation. The leader in this reform, to whom is due the honor of introducing this system to this community, was Dr. Moyes, of Edinburg. He came to Providence in the beginning of the autumn of 1784, and published his intention of giving twenty-one lectures on philosophical chemistry, or the philosophy of nature, with experiments, at the state house, for the sum of one guinea. The fact that he was quite blind, and had been so since he was eighteen months old, moved the sympathy and excited the curiosity of the good people of Providence, and secured him a good audience.

The following year, Dr. Benjamin Waterhouse, then a professor in Rhode-Island College, gave a course of lectures at the state house, on Natural History. Since then, men of less attainments and less natural abilities, have, from time to time, enlightened and amused this community. But whether upon the whole, the amount of knowledge acquired in this way, is so great or so valuable, or so lasting, as that acquired by the old fashioned mode of thought and personal study, is a subject upon which no lectures have, as yet, been given, and, of course, it cannot be expected that any opinion will be expressed in relation to it.



## CHAPTER NINTH.

### NEWSPAPER AND PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS.

In this chapter, it is designed to bring together all that can be collected in relation to the newspapers and periodicals which had been, published in Providence, before and at the adoption of the city charter. It cannot be expected that every publication of the kind will be noticed ; all that can be promised is, that none shall be intentionally omitted.

The first newspaper printed in Providence, was "The Providence Gazette and Country Journal." A handbill, containing the prospectus of the publisher, is now before me, bearing date September 1, 1762. It is signed by William Goddard, and proposes to publish a weekly newspaper, in case sufficient encouragement should be offered ; the first number to be issued on Wednesday the 20th day of October. The terms were "seven shillings lawful money, per annum, or equivalent in currency." The first number appeared on the day appointed. It contains a well written address of the proprietor to his patrons, and the commencement of "The History of Providence," now understood to have been written by Gov. Hopkins. New-York dates are up to the 11th of the same month. It was printed opposite the court house. The second number was printed on



Saturday October 30th, the day of publication having been changed, as the paper states, so "that the gentlemen in Newport and other towns in the southern part of this government, or in Connecticut, who shall please favor this undertaking, may receive their papers by the post." It is both amusing and instructive to read the advertisements in these early Newspapers. Much of the most interesting parts of the history of any municipal corporation, can be learned from this uninviting source. The character of the inhabitants may in part be gathered from the forms these advertisements assume, and the signs which merchants and tradesmen adopted to catch attention.

The following poetical advertisement is taken from the Providence Gazette of November 19, 1796. The author, Jonathan Cady, will long be remembered as a pains-taking, industrious, rhyming shoemaker. Among his cotemporaries, many there were who could claim higher honors as a poet, but few better entitled to the appellation of an honest man and good citizen.

"ADVERTISEMENT.

It may be wise to advertise,  
The work is now in hand,  
He makes a heel, neat and genteel  
As any in the land.  
Court, block and stick, made neat and sleek  
None equal in the state.  
All those that view, may say 'tis true,  
What I do here relate.  
But, to be short, another sort  
Of heels, are called, spring,  
By John Smith made, this is his trade :



He served and learned, at Lynn.  
 Truly 'tis said, these heels are made  
 Within old Providence,  
 Sold by wholesale, or at retail,  
 One dozen, for twelve pence.  
 The purchaser need go no further  
 Only inquire of Bene Thurber,  
 And he can show you where to stop,  
 Because he lives close to my shop.  
 A bunch of grapes, is Thurber's sign,  
 A shoe and boot is made on mine.  
 My shop doth stand in Bowen's lane  
 And Jonathan Cady is my name."

The next week some brother poetaster addressed the following distich to the rhyming cobbler.

"To Mr. Jonathan Cady.

Make an *end* to your rhymes, *close* accounts with the past,  
 And take to your *heels* and you'll speed well at *last*"

The following advertisement copied from the Gazette of the same year, shows, that the complaints so rife in more modern times, against domestic servants, are of long standing. Its insertion may induce some of the complainants to enquire whether part of the evils complained of do not originate from themselves.

"FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS REWARD.—Was mislaid, or taken away by mistake, (soon after the formation of the abolition society,) from the servant girls in this town, all inclination to do any kind of work, and left in lieu thereof, an impudent appearance, a strong and continued thirst for high wages, a gossiping disposition for every sort of amusement, a leering and hankering after persons of the other sex, a desire of finery and fashion, a never-ceasing trot after new places more advantageous for stealing, with a number of contingent accomplishments, that do not suit the wearers. Now if any person or persons will restore to



the owners that degree of honesty and industry, which has been for some time missing, he or they shall receive the above reward of five hundred dollars, besides the warmest blessings of many abused householders."

Sometimes, it is difficult to discover the connection between the sign and the commodities offered for sale. That Shakespeare's head should be selected as a sign for a printing office, or bookstore, or a Buck and a Glove, for a leather dresser's shop, excites no surprise. But why a dealer in English and India goods, should select for his sign, an Elephant, a Golden Eagle, a Boy and a Book, a Black-boy and a Butt, a Fish and a Frying-pan, a Golden Fox, a Black Boy, a Bunch of Grapes, the Sultan's Head, or a Brazen Lion, is by no means so apparent. Such were, however, some of the signs assumed by such dealers, as appears by the early Gazettes. We ought also to be, occasionally, reminded of some things to which these advertisements relate. It might influence, at least, our language, to others. For instance, the following, inserted in January 1763.

"To be sold for want of employ—A likely, spry, healthy negro boy, about ten years of age. Inquire of the printer."

Some of a similar character are found at later dates. In October 1766, is one of the following tenor:

"To be sold at public vendue, to the highest bidder, at the jail in Providence, on Wednesday 15th of this inst. October, by order of the Superior Court, pursuant to his sentence, one Joseph ———, a stout, able-bodied, active man, for the term of three years, to satisfy the damages and costs of his prosecution and conviction for stealing sundry goods from Mr. Obadiah Sprague, of North Providence. W. WHEATON, Sheriff."



In July 1763, the printing office was removed to "the store of Judge Jenckes near the great bridge," and in March 1765, to "the house opposite Mr. Nathan Angell's." This was just North of the First Baptist meeting house. After the publication of No. 134, May 11, 1765, the Gazette was discontinued until August 9, 1766. Mr. Goddard says, in No. 134, that "his hopes far exceeded his success in the undertaking," but expressed a determination to re-commence his paper as soon as the stamp-act should be repealed. On the 24th of August 1765, a "Gazette Extraordinary" appeared in which Mr. Goddard declared his intention soon to resume the publication of the Gazette. Instead, however, of doing so, he removed himself and part of his printing materials to New-York. On the 9th of August 1766, the Gazette appeared again, published by Sarah Goddard & Company, at the printing office near the great bridge. In June 1767, it was removed to the Post Office, opposite Knight Dexter's. This must have been near No. 91, North Main street.—Sarah Goddard was mother of William, and he was probably "the Company." This copartnership was dissolved in September 1767, after which Mr. Goddard and John Carter became joint proprietors and publishers, and continued so till November, when Mrs. Goddard removed from Providence, and Mr. Carter became sole proprietor of the Gazette.

The following passage in the life of Mr. Goddard, is described by himself, in his correspondence with Mr. Isaiah Thomas, of Worcester :



"During the great alarm and stagnation of business, occasioned by the British stamp-act being passed into a law, to be in operation here, I went from Providence to New-York, and assisted Mr. Holt. He showed me several elegantly written and highly spirited essays, against the unjust tax, which no printer at New-York dared to publish. I volunteered my services, went to Woodbridge, and obtained leave to use the apparatus there at pleasure, where I planned a newspaper with this title.

## THE

## CONSTITUTIONAL [Join or die.] COURANT.

{ A snake cut into thirteen parts, with initials in each, em- }  
 { blemating the thirteen colonies, in the centre of the title }

*Containing matters interesting to liberty, but no wise repugnant to loyalty.*

Then followed an address from the editor, Andrew Marvel, mentioning the prudent fears of New-York editors, who declined printing the subjoined, awakening performances, lest they and their families should be ruined by the hand of power, &c. observing, that I had no family and no such apprehensions, and having competent knowledge of the printing business, I was determined to devote my time and talents to promote the welfare of my devoted country, in opposition to the alarming strides of power, &c., and, intimating if No. 1 was well received, other numbers would follow. The paper was completed ending thus: 'Printed by Andrew Marvel, at the sign of the bribe refused, Constitution Hill, North-America.' I sent them by a confidential agent to New-York. Thousands were rapidly sold. It excited much alarm in the government. A council was called at the fort, but nothing could be done with the petty Junius, who was, in a great degree, the sole depository of his own secret. When troubles were overpast, by the repeal of the odious law, this paper was noticed in the Annual Register, and Andrew Marvel's address published, the editor of that work observing, that it was the most significant paper that made its appearance during the troubles in North-America. When one of the council at New-York demanded of the hawker, Lawrence Sweeney, 'where that incendiary paper was published,' he could obtain no other reply than 'at Peter Hassenclaver's Iron works,



may it please your honor.' Peter Hassenclaver, a German of wealth, carried on extensive iron works, well known in New-Jersey. Frequently, afterwards, daring writings appeared with this imprint—'Printed at Peter Hassenclaver's Iron works.' "

Mr. Goddard afterwards engaged in the publication of the "Gazette and Post Boy," in New-York, "The Pennsylvania Chronicle and Universal Advertiser," in Philadelphia, and "The Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser," in Baltimore. In 1792, he returned to Providence, where he resided until his death in 1817. Mr. Thomas says of him, in his History of Printing, "few could conduct a newspaper better than Goddard; he was a capable editor, and his talents were often drawn into requisition." He died in 1817, aged 78 years.

In October 1771, the Providence Gazette was printed in "the new building on Main street, fronting the court house," and subsequently "in Meeting street, opposite the Friends' meeting-house." In November 1793, John Carter and William Wilkinson became partners and joint publishers of the Gazette, the office being removed to "the Post Office, opposite the market." They proposed, in 1795, to publish the Gazette semi-weekly, but did not receive sufficient encouragement to warrant their doing so. The firm continued until May 1799, when Mr. Carter became again the sole owner of the establishment, and so continued until February 1814, when he conveyed it to Hugh H. Brown and William H. Wilson.

The Gazette, under the editorship of Mr. Carter, is such a monument as the firmest patriot and the best citizen might honestly desire. He prided him-



self on the typographical correctness of his paper, and the public relied on the correctness of its contents. It would be difficult to find an error in either department, justly chargeable to Mr. Carter. He was a native of Philadelphia and served his apprenticeship with Dr. Franklin. His friend Mr. Goddard, in the correspondence before referred to, described him, in 1810, with equal truth and humor, by saying, "every virtue appears in full vigor, except his patience." He never was remarkable for the last named virtue, in matters connected with his business, although in ordinary social intercourse, few men exhibited more courteous manners or a better spirit. He died August 19, 1814, in the 70th year of his age.

Messrs. Brown and Wilson published the Gazette until June 1816, when it passed into the hands of Mr. Brown. He was sole publisher until January 1820, when he formed a connexion in business with Walter R. Danforth, who had the oversight of the editorial department of the paper. The Gazette then became a semi-weekly journal, issued during the first year, on Mondays and Thursdays, but afterwards on Wednesdays and Saturdays. This arrangement continued until January 1, 1825, when the firm was dissolved, and Mr. Brown became again sole owner of the establishment. He remained sole proprietor and publisher, with Albert G. Greene as editor, until October 5, when the Gazette became united to the Rhode-Island American. The joint establishment was the property of Carlile (Francis Y.) and Brown. The place of publication, from



1814 until the union of the two establishments, was the building at the corner of Market Square and South Main street. After the union, it was published in one of the buildings on the north side of Market Square. From October 1825, William S. Patten was the editor, for one year. Christopher E. Robbins succeeded him. In March 1827, the firm of Carlile and Brown was dissolved, and Mr. Carlile became sole proprietor and publisher, and in April of the same year, Benjamin F. Hallett took the editorial chair. In 1827, "The Microcosm" was united to this establishment, and in July 1829, "The Cadet and Statesman." The proprietors, then, were Carlile and Parmenter, (Jonathan C.) and the title of the semi-weekly paper, "The Rhode-Island American, Statesman and Gazette." The proprietors commenced at the same time the publication of a daily paper, under the title of "The Daily Advertiser." In November 1829, Daniel Mowry, 3d. became the sole proprietor. The Daily Advertiser was discontinued after February 1833. Mr. Mowry continued the publication of a weekly paper, under the title of "The Microcosm, American and Gazette," until April 1833, when he sold the establishment to James S. Ham and Joseph Knowles. They published the paper one year, under the firm of J. S. Ham & Co., after which it was discontinued.

During the revolutionary war, and the troubles preceding it, the Providence Gazette advocated whig principles. After the peace of 1783, it opposed the paper money party in the state, and advocated the adoption of the Constitution of the United



States. Subsequently, after the new organization of parties, it was a high federal paper. In the latter part of its existence, it espoused the cause of anti-masonry. During the first half century of its existence, the opinions of the editor are seldom given on any subject. The reader is supplied with facts, and left to draw his own conclusions from them.

The next newspaper, in order of time, was "The American Journal and General Advertiser." It was published weekly, on Thursdays, by Southwick (Solomon) and Wheeler, (Bennett) from March until November 1779, at the corner of North Main and Meeting streets, and subsequently by Mr. Wheeler, on the west side of the river. The publication was continued nearly, if not quite, up to the commencement of "The United States Chronicle."

"The United States Chronicle, Political, Commercial and Historical," was a weekly paper, commenced in January 1784, by Bennett Wheeler, and published on Thursdays. He printed it for eighteen years, bringing it down to 1802, when it was discontinued. The Chronicle advocated the adoption of the constitution of the United States, and the general views of the federal party.

The earliest semi-weekly paper in Providence, was "The State Gazette and Town and County Advertiser." The first number bears date January 4, 1796. The publisher and proprietor was Joseph Fry. It was a small paper, even for those times. The days of publication were Mondays and Thursdays, and the place, "the north side of Market



Square." It continued at least six months, but did not probably survive the first year.

"The Providence Journal and Town and County Advertiser," was a weekly paper, published by John Carter, jr. on Wednesdays, for three years, commencing January 1, 1799.

Mr. Samuel J. Williams commenced the publication of "The Impartial Observer," in July 1800. It was a weekly paper, printed on Mondays. Benoni Williams became the publisher, after March 1801. It was discontinued after the second year. Proposals were issued by Mr. Williams for the publication of a paper in the place of the Impartial Observer, to be called "Liberty's Centinel," a few numbers of which were published.

"The Providence Phenix" commenced in May 1803. The publishers were Theodore A. Foster and William W. Dunham. It was published weekly, on Saturdays, in Westminster street. Mr. Foster left the concern, after the first year, and Mr. Dunham continued sole publisher, until July 1805, the place of publication being changed to Market Square. William Olney succeeded Mr. Dunham, and published the Phenix until his death, January 10, 1807. He was succeeded by Jones (Josiah) and Wheeler (Bennett H.) In 1816, they changed the name to that of "The Providence Patriot and Columbian Phenix." From January 1, 1819, it was published semi-weekly, on Wednesdays and Saturdays, by Jones, Wheeler, and Barzillai Cranston, under the firm of J. Jones and company. Mr. Cranston left the concern after the first year. The



publication was continued by Jones and Wheeler, until May 1823, when Eaton W. Maxcy succeeded Mr. Wheeler, and the name of the firm was changed to Jones and Maxcy. After one year, Mr. Maxcy left, and was succeeded by William Simons, and the firm's name again changed to Jones and Simons, and so continued, until December 1829. Mr. Simons then left the concern, after which it was published by Mr. Jones, as agent, for about three years, during a part of which period, James O. Rockwell was editor. Soon after this time, the Patriot was discontinued. During the whole of its existence, it was a high party paper, of the Jeffersonian school of politics.

"The Rhode-Island Farmer," was the title of a weekly paper, printed by Heaton (David) and Williams, (Benoni) commencing in the summer of 1804, and continuing about one year. Amos Hopkins was the reputed editor.

"The American" was commenced October 21, 1808, by Dunham (William W.) and Hawkins (David, jr.) This was the second semi-weekly paper printed in Providence. After the first year, the name was altered to "The Rhode-Island American." The days of publication were Tuesdays and Fridays, and the place, the north side of Market square. Dunham and Hawkins continued the publishers until May 1812, when Mr. Hawkins became sole proprietor, and so remained until October 1813. He then disposed of the establishment to Miller (John) and Man (William W.) who continued its publication until April 1814. Up to this late date,



there was no regular editor to this paper. Then William G. Goddard became joint proprietor with Miller & Man, and assumed the charge of the editorial department. In January 1815, Mr. Miller retired from the concern, and the publication was continued by Goddard and Man, until the death of Mr. Man in March 1817, when Mr. Goddard became sole proprietor. The paper was published by Goddard and Knowles (James D.) from July 1819, until October 1820, when Mr. Knowles retiring, Mr. Goddard became, again, sole publisher as well as proprietor, and so continued until October 1825, when he transferred the establishment to Francis Y. Carlile, who immediately connected it with the Providence Gazette, as has been before stated.

The American was ever a decided advocate of the principles and policy of the old Federal party.

During the last war, a weekly paper was started in Providence, under the name of "The Providence Centinel and War Chronicle." Herman B. and Daniel Man, were the publishers, and George R. Burrill, the editor. But a few numbers were ever published.

"The Manufacturers' and Farmers' Journal, and Providence and Pawtucket Advertiser," commenced in January 1820. It was issued on Mondays and Thursdays. Miller (John) and Hutchens (John) were the publishers, and William E. Richmond the editor. The editor's name was withdrawn from the imprint, after the first year. At the end of the third year, Mr. Miller became the sole proprietor, and so continued, till May 1833, when he entered into co-



partnership with George Paine. They published the Journal, up to January 1, 1836, when the establishment passed into the hands of George W. Jackson, who retained it until July 1833, when he transferred it to Knowles (Joseph) and Burroughs (William L.) These last named gentlemen owned the establishment up to February 1839, when Mr. Burroughs transferred his interest to John W. Vose. In July 1840, Knowles and Vose transferred a part of the establishment to Henry B. Anthony. Mr. Anthony assumed the editorial chair in July 1833. Previous to that time, Benjamin F. Hallett, Thomas Rivers, Lewis Gaylord Clark, and Thomas H. Webb, had successively been editors of the Journal, although no editor's name appeared in the imprint, after the first year. In 1824, the Independent Inquirer was united to the Journal establishment, and after that time, it was issued from the same office. In July 1829, the proprietors commenced publishing a daily paper, under the name of "The Providence Daily Journal." "The Courier" became united to the Journal, in 1840, and was issued only semi-weekly, on Tuesdays and Fridays.

The leading object of the Journal, at its outset, was to aid the cause of home industry and domestic manufactures. It did good service to that cause then, and has ever been its faithful and efficient advocate. In questions of general politics, it is identified with the Whig party in the state and country. Though it is now in its green old age, it has survived all the other newspapers which were in course of publication at its commencement.



"The Independent Inquirer" commenced August 27, 1823. It was published weekly for about one year, by Barnum Field, after which he transferred the establishment to the Journal.

"The Beacon" was issued weekly for more than two years, commencing January 10th 1824, by William S. Spear. It was a fearless paper, in the most extended signification of the term.

"The Microcosm" was also a weekly paper. It was commenced June 10, 1825, by Walter R. Danforth. After No. 13 of the third volume, it was transferred to the Rhode-Island American, as before stated.

"The Literary Cadet and Saturday Evening Bulletin," was the title of a weekly paper, commenced April 22d, 1826, by Smith (Samuel J.) & Parmenter (Jonathan C.) After the first year, it became a semi-weekly. This was a very popular newspaper, and at an early day of its existence is said to have obtained a weekly circulation of about four thousand copies. Sylvester S. Southworth was the editor of it during the greater part of its existence. In July, 1829, it was united to the American and Gazette.

"The Investigator and General Intelligencer" was published weekly, by James B. Yerrinton, commencing in October 1827. William Goodell was editor, and the place of publication the Canal Market building. This was a political paper, not attached however to any party, of course it received the patronage of neither, but on the contrary was opposed by all. In December 1828, it was removed to Boston and united to the "National Philanthro-



pist." Subsequently, it was united to the "Genius of Temperance," and carried to New-York, where it was discontinued.

In 1818, a small paper entitled "The Juvenile Gazette," was published a few months. Origen Bachelier edited it at first, and subsequently William H. Smith. Hugh H. Brown printed it.

"The Republican Herald," under the title of "The Herald," commenced in August 1828. The following month, it was enlarged, and the name changed. John S. Greene, was the printer and publisher until July 1829, when he transferred it to William Simons, jr. who has ever since published it. He removed the place of publication from "the Whitaker building" so called, to the north side of Market Square. The Herald was published weekly on Saturdays, up to January 1832, after which it was issued on Wednesdays and Saturdays. In February 1840, Mr. Simons commenced the publication of "The Daily Evening Herald," but discontinued it, after about six months, for want of support. The Herald has always advocated Democratic principles.

"The Beacon Light" commenced Saturday, March 11, 1829, and continued but a short time.—W. A. Brown was the publisher of it. In May following, the same publisher issued "The Little Genius," which was also a short lived paper.

"The Literary Subaltern," was first published semi-weekly, commencing January 1, 1829. At the close of the first year, it became a weekly paper. William Marshall was the publisher until October 2, 1829, when he transferred it to Hall (John W. D.)



and Simmons (Brown.) Mr. Hall relinquished his interest in the concern to Mr. Simmons, who remained sole publisher until November 30, 1832, when he sold the establishment to Sylvester S. Southworth, who published it but a short time. He was the editor of it from its commencement. This was a literary and political paper, and fearlessly independent.

"The Providence Free Press" began in April, 1830, in this city, having been previously, for some time, published in Pawtucket. During its publication, which was but a single year, it was the organ of the Anti-Masonic party in the state.

"The Chronicle of the Times," was the title of a newspaper, a few numbers only of which were published. The first number bears date September 18th, 1831. Bennett H. Wheeler was proprietor and editor.

"The Scourge," was published in the year 1810, occasionally. It bore the name of no printer, publisher or editor. The contents were generally so personal, as to render secrecy desirable by all concerned in it. Only three or four numbers were published.

There is another class of Periodicals almost exclusively devoted to the diffusion of religious information. These are ordinarily of a sectarian origin and character. So many different sects have always existed in Providence, in proportion to its population, that such publications have always had but little patronage, not enough to sustain them for any considerable length of time.



The first, in order of time, was "The Religious Intelligencer or Christian Monitor." This was a weekly paper, of quarto form, of four pages. It was published, at the American office, and edited by James D. Knowles. The first number is dated May 13, 1820. After six months, he discontinued it, for want of support.

In May, 1821, Barber Badger, revived this paper, under the name of "The Religious Intelligencer." After a few numbers, it assumed the name of "The Rhode-Island Religious Intelligencer." It was issued from the same office, weekly. In May, 1823, it was enlarged to a folio, and became a half newspaper, with the title of "The Religious Intelligencer and Evening Gazette." It was published in this form, one year.

"The Rhode-Island Baptist" was published in monthly numbers, from October 1823, to September 1824. Allen Brown was the editor and publisher, and John Miller the printer.

"The Christian Telescope" commenced August 7, 1824. It was a weekly quarto, of four pages, and was edited by David Pickering, pastor of the First Universalist church, and printed and published by Barzillai Cranston, for one year. After that, John S. Greene became the publisher. In August 1826, it was enlarged to eight pages, and the title changed to "The Christian Telescope and Universalist Miscellany." In December 1826, F. C. Swain became associated with Mr. Greene in the publication of this paper. From December 1826, to September 1827, it was printed by Cranston and Mar-



shall, after that Mr. Greene printed it and was sole publisher. He changed the form to a folio, and the name to "The Christian Telescope and Friday Morning General Intelligencer," in November 1828, and Jacob Frieze became associated with Mr. Pickering in the editorship. It was discontinued in the year 1829.

"The Anti-Universalist," commenced in 1827, was the antagonist of the Christian Telescope. Origin Bachelier was its publisher and editor, and James B. Yerrinton, the printer, a part of the time, at least. It was removed to Boston in December 1828, where, after undergoing various changes of proprietor, printer, editor, and even name itself, it ceased to be.

"The Hopkinsian Magazine," edited by Otis Thompson, of Rehoboth, and printed by Hugh H. Brown, was published from 1824 to 1840.

"The Freewill Baptist Magazine," commenced in May 1826. The first volume consists of eight numbers, which were published quarterly, by several elders of the Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting, Zalmon Tobey being the editor, and Barzillai Cranston the printer. After the first volume, the Quarterly Meeting assumed the publication of the work, which extended through two volumes more, up to May 1830. The last two volumes were issued in monthly numbers, under the same editor, the first of them being printed by James B. Yerrington, and the other by Marshall & Hammond.

"The Religious Messenger," was the title of a weekly quarto of four pages, commenced July 2, 1825. It was printed by Barnum Field, for Origen



Bachelor, editor, every Saturday morning. In 1826 and 1827 it was published under the title of "The Rhode-Island Religious Messenger," by James B. Yerrington and Yerrington & Ellis, "under the patronage of the Rhode-Island State Convention," and edited by a committee of that body, until August 12, 1826, when James N. Seaman became the editor. In the course of the year 1827, it was enlarged to a folio form, and William Goodell became the editor. In January 1828, it was published on Friday mornings, and was probably discontinued that year. This was a sectarian paper, only so far as to make it accord with the views of what were called "Evangelical Christians," and yet, though patronised by so large a class of Christians, it died for want of support.

"The Gospel Preacher," was published about one year from December 1827. David Pickering was the editor, and John S. Greene the printer. It was issued monthly, in octavo form, each number containing two original sermons, by Universalist ministers.

"The Union Conference Magazine," was the title of a periodical published in August 1829, by Ray Potter. It was devoted to the interests of the Freewill Baptists. One number only was published.

"The Rhode-Island Journal and Sunday School and Bible Class Advocate," was a semi-monthly publication, edited and published by the Rev. David Benedict, during the year 1831.

"The Sunday School Herald." A single sheet with



this title was published on the 26th day of April 1832, under the patronage of the Sunday School Union.

No papers of this class were being published at the time of the adoption of the city charter. Those that previously existed, had stopped, and generally after a comparatively short race, and for want of patronage. This did not happen because the citizens of Providence did not patronize such publications. There can be no doubt, that their subscriptions for such papers published abroad would have supported several at home.

Such also was the case with periodicals purely literary. With great exertions, one or two such publications have outlived their first year. It will be seen that most of this class never attained that age.

The first in order of time, was "The Rhode-Island Literary Repository." This was a monthly publication, in octavo form, commenced in April 1814. The editorial department was under the supervision of Isaac Bailey. The publication was relinquished at the end of the first volume. Robinson (Martin) and Howland (Benjamin) were the publishers.

"The Ladies' Magazine" was also published monthly. The first number appeared in March 1823. The second did not appear until August following. The work was suspended after a few months. It was "edited by a lady," and printed by John Miller.

"The Ladies' Museum" commenced in July 1825. This was published weekly for one year, by Eaton W. Maxcy, when it was discontinued.



“The Toilet and Ladies’ Cabinet of Literature,” was a small weekly quarto of four pages, which commenced January 5th, 1823. Josiah Snow was the publisher; Owen G. Warren edited it until November. After that, Samuel M. Fowler was the editor. From August 1828, until November, it was published by W. A. Brown, and after that, by Smith and Parmenter. The second volume commenced January 24, 1829, under the title of “The Saturday Evening Gazette and Ladies’ Toilet,” in folio form.

This was followed, in 1829, by “The Brunonian,” edited by students of Brown University. It was published monthly, in octavo form, for one year, commencing in July.

“The Original,” was the title of a monthly magazine edited by Frances H. Whipple and printed by Marshall and Hammond, in 1829. Two numbers, only, were published.

“The Olla Podrida” was made up principally of original matter, and published occasionally by John Bisbee, afterward a distinguished Universalist clergyman. Not more than three or four numbers were ever published.

Some periodicals remain, which could not properly be classed with the preceding, but which deserve to be noticed as part of the periodical literature of Providence. They are, Almanacs, Directories, Registers and Tax books.

The first Almanac published in Providence, and “calculated for its meridian,” was by Benjamin West, in 1763. From that year up to the present



time, (1843) there always has been at least one printed each year. Dr. West calculated and published one yearly, with little if any omission, until 1735. In 1769, Abraham Weatherwise published one, and in 1790, and in several successive years, Bennett Wheeler published his "North American Calendar." The venerable Isaac Bickerstaff commenced here his labors in almanac-making, as early as 1731. Each succeeding year since, has added one to his literary progeny. Notwithstanding the increase of rival publications addressed to the religious and political partialities, and to the various prejudices of the prevailing *ism* of the year, whatever it is, the works of Mr. Bickerstaff are sought after with avidity. His omission recently, to publish prognostications in relation to the weather, have diminished, in some degree, his popularity; but no other almanac-maker could have sustained himself, after such a departure from long established usage.

The publication of "The Rhode-Island Register and United States Calendar," commenced in 1819, by Hugh H. Brown. This was continued annually until 1832, by him, and by the firm of Brown & Danforth.

The first "Directory" of Providence, was published by Brown & Danforth, in 1824. Since that time a Directory has generally been published once in two or three years.

The publication of the "Tax Book," commenced in 1827, and has generally been followed up every year since. Though written principally in Arabic characters and abounding in figurative language, it



is a work much conned over. That part of it which points out what each individual is bound to pay toward the public burdens, is, in most instances, read with a sigh, by the persons interested, while that part which contains the reasons for the apportionment, the valuation of each, is perused with pleasurable sensations. Many a man is not aware of his wealth, till he finds it in this book, while others enjoy a secret pleasure in its perusal, arising from the success of their endeavors to conceal their prosperity. Upon the whole, it is rather a taking work.



## CHAPTER TENTH.

### PURCHASES OF THE NATIVES, AND DIVISIONS OF THE TOWN.

It was the misfortune of most of the English colonies in America, to be early and deeply involved in disputes with one another in relation to their respective jurisdictions and boundaries. These arose partly from the conflicting and contradictory patents granted by the English sovereigns, and the boundaries prescribed in successive charters. No one can peruse these instruments without being struck with the utter ignorance of the geography of the country, and with the utter recklessness of consequences, which they evince. It is scarcely possible to conceive that the vast tracts of land which they convey could ever have been esteemed so valueless as these circumstances prove that they were ; and yet, nothing but their small value at that time, could have prevented such innumerable and endless quarrels as would ruin any country, however valuable. Another fruitful source of disputes, was the ambiguity, vagueness and uncertainty, which pervaded most of the grants that the colonies received from the natives. These arose, in some instances, probably from design, and in others, from the difficulty of communication between the parties. Hence in part origina-



ted the distrust and jealousy of the natives, which continually filled the colonists with fears, and occasionally overwhelmed them in blood; and hence, also, private bickerings and disputes between adjoining colonies as to title, which frequently disturbed the peace of these infant settlements. As the disputes first alluded to, related principally to jurisdiction, and grew out of the grants from the common sovereign of them all, they were definitely settled by appealing to that sovereign. But the latter were more lasting, because no such effectual and speedy method existed for their settlement; and more acrimonious, as they involved individual interest and private feeling.

The colony of Providence was happily exempted from disputes of the first class; not that the causes that produced them elsewhere, were not also in active operation here, producing the like results, but as the colonists of Providence had neither patent nor charter from England, except as united with the other colonies within the state, all those colonies so united, were the party in these disputes, and they belong to the history of the state, rather than to the history of the town. Difficulties enough, however, arose from the other cause, to retard the growth and mar the tranquillity of the town, during almost the whole of the first century of its existence. The deed of the sachems to Mr. Williams, which is given on page 26, is, in an especial manner, liable to the charge of ambiguity and vagueness. The bounds established and confirmed by it, "from the river and fields of Pawtucket, the great hill of Neotacon-



kanitt, on the northwest, and the town of Mashapaug on the west," are more exact and certain than those of most deeds of the same kind, executed at the same period. "The great hill of Neotoconkanitt" still retains its location and its name. It is about three miles westerly from where Weybosset bridge now stands. "The town of Mashapaug" was near the pond that now bears the same name about two miles south of Neotaconkanitt. "The river and fields of Pawtucket," have given their name to the village of North Providence, which now probably occupies the place of the "fields." Had the description ended here, or added as a southern bound the Pawtuxet river, there would have been little difficulty or doubt about the matter. But it does not; the deed goes on, for a new consideration, to grant "all that land from those rivers" (that is, the Moshassuck and Wanasquatucket,) "reaching to Pawtuxet river; as also the grass and meadows upon the said Pawtuxet river."

This clause is apparently inconsistent with the preceding part of the deed, and the meaning of the whole instrument is rendered by it, vague and uncertain. The extent of the grant is made tenfold more uncertain, by the confirmation, as it was called, which was appended to it in 1639. Miantonomi, one of the original grantors, then confirmed the deed and "acknowledged this his act and hand up the streams of Pawtucket and Pawtuxet, without limits, we might have for our use of cattle."—Such was the indefinite extent of the first purchase of Providence. With such bounds, if bounds they



may be called, it must have required the greatest prudence on the part of the settlers, to prevent difficulties between them and the ignorant and jealous Narragansetts. They succeeded, however, in maintaining peaceable relations with them, while strife and contention between themselves divided them into parties, and weakened and almost destroyed the system of government which they had established.

This deed was understood to convey little more than the right of jurisdiction over the land it described. The general right that the sachem possessed in the soil, passed under it, but such Indians as had built wigwams, or planted upon it, were also to be satisfied. In some instances, individuals among the purchasers, bought off the natives residing on their lands, and in others the whole body of purchasers joined, and, from their common stock, paid them for their right in the soil, and it was not uncommon that a succession of such claimants would appear, and receive satisfaction. The sums paid to these individuals, generally far exceeded the amount paid to the sachems.

In 1646, Massasoit, sachem of the Wampanoags, laid claim to the sovereignty of part of the purchase, or of land adjoining it. It is generally supposed that his jurisdiction never extended beyond the Narragansett bay and the Seekonk river. Yet, in those times, it was deemed expedient to quiet their possession by purchase of every claimant, however frivolous or unfounded his claim might be, rather than to expose themselves to the imputation of denying the right of the natives to the soil on which they



dwelt. In this case, an agreement was made with Massasoit, for a conveyance of his pretended right. The terms were settled and the deed drawn, but when it was presented to him for his signature he refused to execute it. The circumstances are detailed at length in the following "testimony" copied from the state records.

Wapewasik, over against Portsmouth 10. 7. 46 so called.— We, Gregory Dexter, Thomas Olney, Roger Williams and Robert Williams, in a word of truth and faithfulness declare, that being requested by the town of Providence, in our name and in their behalf, to buy the right which Ousamequin pretendeth to a parcel of land, which lies between our bounds at Pawtucket and an Indian plantation northwest from thence called Loquassuck, and knowing that our town had right to the feeding and grazing of cattle upon the said parcel of land, by our grant of the Nanhygganset purchase before such times as they since released him of his subjection, as also, that it was upland, from the water and most of it barren and rocky, without meadow ; so making a journey to Ousamequin's house, offered him but fifteen fathom of white wampum (it being a time when white wampum only was current, and which we knew he would accept) but he desired to have commodities and wampum, and, at last, we agreed upon ten fathom of white wampum, four coats of English cloth, six of the best English hoes, and English axes, and twelve great knives, which wampum and commodities, he desiring speedy payment, we went, all of us, over to Portsmouth, to procure the said wampum and commodities, he furnishing us with a canoe and a native, where some of us performed good service for him, in some controversies between the English and him. We brought him the wampum, which he accepted of, the coats also, which he accepted of, and received the cloth, choosing out of two parcels, but of twelve knives he chose eight, out of six hoes, he chose one, we promising to procure him the rest of the hoes and hatchets and knives to his liking, which he was fully content. Afterward going to sleep, he begged two coats of us, which we promised to give him ; yet in the morning some



of us refusing to sell him shot, as also all refusing to give him four coats more, he took forth our money and goods again to us, which we refused, not being willing to countenance such dealing in the barbarians, and having before, in their payments and a coat to his chancellor which he desired, and other small gifts unto them, laid out the value of about forty fathom of wampum, we were not willing to wrong our own country in granting his desire of four coats, and so unreasonably to raise the price of such parcels of land in this barbarous wilderness, and, therefore, we declare, that the said land, according to a fair and righteous bargain, belongs to the town of Providence, the town paying to Ousamequin, as aforesaid.

ROGER WILLIAMS,	ROBERT WILLIAMS,
GREGORY DEXTER,	THOMAS OLNEY.

In 1658, a committee was appointed to treat with the Indians who claim Loisquisset, and clear it for the town. There is no report of their proceedings.

The Court of Commissioners, in May 1659, authorised the town to buy off the Indians within their bounds, and to add not exceeding three thousand acres to their jurisdiction, by purchase of the sachems. They soon availed themselves of the liberty first granted. At the same time they also took deeds from the sachems, successors of Conanicus and Miantonomi. In these, the western bounds of the colony are more clearly defined. By one of the two parties that then divided the town, these were called deeds of mere confirmation; the other party considered them as new purchases.

“ Providence, the 3d month, 29th day, 1659.

This be known to all that it may concern, in all ages to come, that I Caujaniquaunte, sachem of the Narragansetts, ratify and confirm to the men of Providence, and to the men of Pawtuxette, their lands and deed, that my brother Meantonomeah made over and disposed to them, namely, all the lands between




Pawtucket river and Pawtuxet river, up the streams without limit for their use of cattle ; and I also do for summer and winter feeding of their cattle and ploughing and all other necessary improvements, as for farms and all manner of plantations whatsoever : This land, I say, above said, I confirm to the aforesaid men at this present, twenty full miles, beginning to measure from a hill, called Fox's hill, upon a straight line, running up into the country between Pawtuckette and Pawtuxcette river. This land and these appurtenances I hereby confirm to them and their heirs and assigns forever, and that my heirs and assigns shall not molest them nor their assigns forever in any of the lands above said ; and that I am always ready to defend their title from the claim of any Indians whatsoever. In witness whereof I hereto set my hand.

The mark of



CAUJANQUAUNTE.

The witnesses,

AWAUSHOWES, his  mark.

MATTACKCEES, called Newcom, his W mark.

We also witnesses :

Nathaniel Waterman,

Andrew Harris.

I, Aiaquaomit, own this my father his act and deed, which is above written, and do acknowledge, that I have received full satisfaction for all the right and claim which could be laid by me unto any of those lands which my brother hath sold unto the men of Providence and the men of Pawtuxett. Witness my hand this 28 of April in the year 1660.

The mark



of AIAQUAOMIT.

W The mark of MATTACKCEES, alias Newcom.

THOMAS OLNEY Junior.

For Pawtuxette and Providence, the 6 mo, 13 day, 1659.

This be known to all ages upon any just occasion, that we Cussuckquanth and Nenekealah chief sachems over the Indians in these parts of the country, ratify and confirm to the men of Providence and the men of Pawtuxette, their lands according to



their joint agreements, which our brother Meantenomeah possessed them with, that is, all the lands between Pawtucket and Pawtucket, between the streams of these rivers, and up these streams without limits, or as far as they shall think fit. These lands and the appurtenances, we confirm to them, in and for good considerations, to them, their heirs and assigns forever, Nevertheless, it shall not be lawful for the aforesaid men to remove the Indians that are up in the country, except they shall satisfy those Indians, and so cause them to depart willingly, neither shall any of those Indians sell any part of their said lands to any man whatsoever, only it shall be lawful for those Indians to receive some recompence for their removing off, if they see cause, of the aforesaid Englishmen of Providence or Pawtuxette according to their joint agreement. Also we bind our heirs and assigns forever not to molest, the aforesaid men nor their heirs nor assigns upon any of the aforesaid lands forever.

Witness our hands

CUSSUCKQUANTH his mark :—>

NENEKEALAH his mark ——— \* \*

AWATHOWES his mark \*—


RICHARD SMITH,

JAMES SMITH.

These bear witness to all ages to come, to such as are concerned herein. That we, Scuttape and Quequaganewet, son to Meakeaw, son to Quananone, called by the English Qun-nounicus uncle to Meantonomeah, who made a peace with the English in the Massachusetts, for all the Indians in these parts, in the time of the Pequot war with the English. This our grandfather and cousin, chief sachems, granted to Roger Williams, agent for the men of Providence and the men of Pawtuxett, a tract of land, reaching from Pawtucket river to Pawtuxett river, all the lands between the streams of those rivers, and up those streams without limits for their use of cattle, did they grant to the men abovesaid, the men of Providence and the men of Pawtuxett to whom we establish the lands aforesaid up the streams of those rivers, and confirm without limits, or as far as the men abovesaid of Providence and Pawtuxett shall judge convenient for their use of cattle, as feeding, ploughing, plant-





ing all manner of plantations whatsoever ; we say, all the lands, according to the limits abovesaid, we establish and confirm to the men of Providence and the men of Pawtuxcett, according to their joint agreement, in the most absolute tenure of fee simple, to them, their heirs and assigns forever, and hereby bind ourselves, our heirs and assigns, not to molest or trouble the men abovesaid in the full enjoyment of the land abovesaid. Nevertheless, it shall not be lawful for the men abovesaid to remove the Indians, that are up in the country from their fields, without the Indians' consent and content, nor shall it be lawful for any of those Indians to sell any of the lands abovesaid to any, only it shall be lawful for them, to take of the men of Providence and the men of Pawtuxcett, according to their joint agreement, satisfaction for their removing. And we have established to the men abovesaid the land and deed granted by our grandfather and cousin, so do we also confirm the grants of confirmation by our cousins Cussuckquanth, Caujaniquanutte and Nenekealah.

The mark of SCUTTAPE, 

Dated this first of December 1659—

Signed and delivered in presence of us

MANATASH,  his mark, Indian interpreter,

NANTOMOROAW,  his mark,

RICHARD SMITH,

RICHARD SMITH jr.

JAMES SMITH,

WILLIAM DYRE.

The mark of QUEQUAGANEWET.



In February following, a grant of thirty shillings was made to Aioquomitt, in consideration of his deed. A committee, consisting of Thomas Walling, Henry Brown, William Harris, William Wickenden, John Fenner and Daniel Brown, was appointed "to set the bounds of the plantation twenty miles from Fox's hill westward, up in the country," in pursuance of the deeds last copied.



That Mr. Williams was dissatisfied with these proceedings, is evident from the following correspondence, between him and the town, in October of this year:

“ Loving Friends and Neighbors—Divers of yourselves have so cried out of the contentions of your late meetings, that (studying my quietness) I thought fit to present you these few lines. Two words, I pray you to consider. First, as to this plantation of Providence; then, as to some new plantation, if it shall please the same God of mercies, who provided this, to provide another, in mercy for us.

First, as to this town. Although I have been called out of late to declare my understanding as to the bounds of Providence and Pawtuxet, and although divers have land and meadows in possession, beyond these bounds, yet I [illegible] that none of you think me so senseless as to put any barbarian to molest an Englishman or to demand a farthing of any of you.

Second. If any do, (as formerly some have done and divers have given gratuities, as Mr. Field, about Neotoconkanitt, and others) I promise, that as I have been assistant to satisfy and pacify the natives round about us, so I hope I shall, still while I live, be helpful to any of you, that may have occasion to use me.

Now as to some new plantations, I desire to propose that which may quench contention, may accommodate such who want, and may also return monies unto such as have of late disbursed. To this purpose, I desire, that we be patient and not torment ourselves and the natives, sachem and people, putting them upon mischievous remedies, with the great noise of twenty miles new, or old purchases.

Let us consider if Miswosaket and Wayunkeke, and the land thereabout, may not afford a new and comfortable plantation, which we may go through with all effectual endeavors, for true public good. To this end, I pray you consider, that the inhabitants of these parts with most of the Cowesets and Nipmucks, have long since forsaken the Narragansett sachems, and subjected themselves to the Massachusetts; and yet, they are free



to sell their lands to any whom the Massachusetts shall not protest against. To this end, observing their often flights, and to stop their running to the Massachusetts, I have parlied with them, and find that about thirty pounds will cause them to leave those parts and yield peaceable possession. I suppose then that the town may do well to give leave to about twenty of the inhabitants (of which I offer to be one, and know others willing) to lay down thirty shillings a man toward the purchase. Let every one of this number have liberty to remove himself or to place a child or friend there. Let every person who shall afterward be received into the purchase lay down thirty shillings, as hath been done in Providence, which may be paid, by some order agreed on, to such as have lately disbursed monies. Unto the effecting of this, I offer, gratis, my time and services, in hopes, that such as want may have a comfortable supply amongst us, and others made room for, who may be glad of a shelter also.

Yours, to serve you,

27, 8, 60, so called.

ROGER WILLIAMS."

The following answer, drawn up by Thomas Olney, sen. William Harris and Arthur Fenner, was returned by the town :

"We received your letter, and it being read in the ears of the town, they considered this answer : 1. That from these words in our evidence taken by you which are these, "the lands upon Moshassuck and Wanasquatucket," which lands, comprehend Masswasacutt, it appears ours already, and when we plant there, we will agree with the Indians either to remove or fence. 2. When as you say, the Indians have subjected to the Bay, we say, they were subject to the Narragansett sachems when you bought the land which we now have, and yourself propose yet to buy. And we know, that if we let go our true hold already attained, we shall, if not ourselves, yet our posterity, smart for it, and we conceive herein, that we do truly understand what yourself doth not. And if your apprehension take place, as we hope it never will, in these your proposals, we haply may see, what, we conceive you desire not, the ruin of what you have given name to, viz. poor Providence. As for the natives complaining, we



have not yet wronged them any further than satisfaction, that we know of, nor shall not. What their wrongs to us are, we have hitherto rather smothered, than complained, yet we must tell you, that we shall not be averse to any fair gratuity, either to take them off their fields or otherwise, always having respect unto the act of the sachems, whom you have formerly so much honored. And herein, if you can accomplish, we shall be ready to assist with further pay, upon our former grounds, otherwise we shall not meddle, and forbid any so to do. Thus in love, though in brief return, we rest your neighbors.

The Town of Providence,

Per me, THOMAS OLNEY, jr.

Oct. 29, 1660.

Clerk in the behalf of the town.

To Mr. Roger Williams, these."

I suppose "Miswosaket" and "Masswasacutt," in these letters, to refer to the same place. It was probably situate near what is now called "Meshwansecut" pond, in the northeast corner of the present town of Scituate. "Wayunkeke" is in Smithfield, between the Wanasquatucket and Pawtucket rivers.

At a town meeting in January 1661, a number of townsmen were permitted to purchase Aquidneset, reserving a right to all the others to become jointly interested with them, by paying a proportion of the purchase money, by the first of March. The town annex to this permission, a provision that it shall not affect the rights of the town acquired from the Narragansett sachems.

In May, the town borrowed £20 to pay for clearing off certain Indian titles. Probably it was expended in procuring the following deeds :

"Providence, 10, 3, 1661, so called. This certifieth that I, Wettiaskant, sachem, formerly living at Wachimoquot, now at







Brown, Valentine Whitman and Roger Williams, all my right and interest, claim and challenge, unto any lands, grounds and meadows lying and being on the west side of Seecunk or Pawtuckt river, for the use of the town of Providence, excepting a tract of land, about four or five miles, which I gave leave to William, or Quashawaunamut of Massachuset, to dispose of, which said land begins at the old field of Wasquodomisk ; and whereas, I have no interest in any land beyond that tract assigned to William aforesaid, only some subjects of mine lay claim to the next tract of land beyond that of William, his tract, called Mashackquunt, I do promise to deal with my said subjects to treat and agree with Providence men, if they please, before any other English. In witness of the premises, I set to mine hand and seal,

The mark **A** of ALEXANDER.

alias Waumsittou, or Sepaugut.

In the presence of

DANIEL WILLIAMS,

JOHN SAUSAMAN,

The mark **H** of TOM WACHAMOKET.

Providence 24, 4mo, 1662, so called.

This witnesseth that I, Wesauomog sachem, inhabitant of Mishpashit, do by these presents, for good considerations in hand received, with which I acknowledge myself fully satisfied, I give and surrender up all my right, interest and claim unto the land aforesaid, unto Thomas Olney, sen. John Brown, Valentine Whitman and Roger Williams, in the name and for the use of the men of Providence and their heirs and assigns forever ; and do promise to keep a league of friendship and love with them and to endeavor that all the natives of Mashousakit, shall so do, and that the English may freely cut the meadows, build houses, feed cattle, and plant the ground, in peace and safety. The bounds of this land he saith, is southward from the pond of Mishousakit about three miles to a pond called Nanipsick, northward joining to Wayunakege, eastward, near Sakesakit, and westward about seven miles.

In witness of the premises, I subscribe my mark,

Witness,

The mark of WESAUOMOG, **⊙**

The mark of GEORGE, called Pigseyes, **□**

OBADIAH HULLMES,

MARKE LUCCAR.



These are all the conveyances made by the natives to the town that can now be found in the files or records. There is a reference to another deed from Wuttation. The land that it conveyed, lies either in Smithfield or in Burrillville, but neither the extent, bounds, or location of it, can be ascertained. Purchases were also made from the natives by individuals, some of which embraced large tracts.— Among the most considerable of these was the Westquanoid purchase, which lies between the north branch of the Pawtuxet river, and the dividing line between the present counties of Providence and Kent. The Westquanoid purchasers, belonged principally to Rhode-Island.

It is impossible to locate the lands conveyed by these deeds, with exactness.

About the same time that Mr. Williams executed his first deed to his twelve companions in exile, the following arrangement was entered into between them, for a division of the lands:

“ An agreement made between the several inhabitants of the town of Providence, the 8th of the 8 month 1638. It is agreed, this day abovesaid, that all the meadow ground at Pawtuxet, bounding upon the fresh river upon both sides, is to be impropriated unto these thirteen persons, being now incorporate into our town of Providence, viz. Ezekiel Holyman, Francis Weston, Richard Waterman, Thomas Olney, Robert Coles, William Carpenter, William Harris, John Throckmorton, Roger Williams, John Greene, Thomas James, William Arnold, Stukely Westcott, and to be equally divided among them, and every man to pay an equal proportion to raise up the sum of twenty pounds for the same, and if it shall come to pass, that some or any one of these thirteen persons abovesaid do not pay or give satisfaction for his or their equal proportion of the abovesaid



sum of twenty pounds, by this day eight weeks, which will be the seventeenth day of the tenth month next ensuing, that they or he, shall leave their or his proportion of meadow ground unto the rest of those thirteen persons, to be at their disposing who shall make up the whole sum of twenty pounds, which is to be paid unto Roger Williams.

Memorandum. On the third day of the tenth month, 1638, so called, according to former agreement, I received of the neighbors abovesaid the full sum of £18. 11. 3, per me,

ROGER WILLIAMS."

The date of the foregoing agreement, as stated in the copy from which the foregoing was copied, is the same with the date of the "Initial deed" of Mr. Williams; but it is evident there is either a mistake in the date or in the body, of the instrument. From the eighth of October, eight weeks would not be the seventeenth but the third day of December, the date of the memorandum of payment.

The object of the agreement, undoubtedly was to secure to the first settlers and purchasers of Providence, a portion of the purchase for their own use. The natural meadows on the banks of the Pawtuxet were selected as being of the greatest immediate value. There existed no necessity of precision in the bounds of the part so set off, at first, nor while the proprietors of both purchases were the same individuals. Nor was it then contemplated, that any change of circumstances, would render it more difficult to state the precise bounds at some future period. But as soon as the proprietors of Providence were increased by the admission of other persons, to the "same fellowship of vote" with the original purchasers, the want of certainty in the description



and boundaries of the portion appropriated to themselves exclusively, was felt as a great evil. It gave rise to mistrust and jealousy among the inhabitants of Providence, and divided them into parties. An attempt was made as early as 1640, to settle the line between the two proprietries. The difficulty had then so far progressed, that the parties were obliged to call upon some individuals to act as arbitrators between them. Their report is given in page 40. They decided, that the dividing line should

“Run upon a straight line from a fresh spring, being in the gully at the head of the cove, running by the point of land called Saxeffrax, unto the town of Mashapaug, to an oak tree standing near the cornfield, being at this time the nearest cornfield unto Pawtuxet, the oak tree having four marks with an axe, till some other landmark be set for a certain bound. Also, we agree, that if any meadow ground lying adjoining to that meadow that borders upon the river of Pawtuxet, come within the aforesaid line, which will not come within a straight line from the long cove to the marked tree, then, for that meadow to belong to Pawtuxet; and so, beyond the town of Mashapaug, from the oak-tree, between the two fresh rivers Pawtuxet and Wanasquatucket of an even distance.”

This report was signed by the greater part of the proprietors of both purchasers. It does not appear that the lines then agreed upon were run out. In fact, the indefinite nature of the bound set to the purchase, precluded the possibility of their ever being run out. The line from the spring to Mashapaug, was definitely settled, but the line “between the two fresh rivers, Pawtuxet and Wanasquatucket, could not be, until the parties agreed “what land and meadows” upon the Wanasquatucket they possessed, and what was granted them in 1639, when



Miantonomi acknowledged his prior deed and added, "up the streams of Pawtucket and Pawtuxet, without limits, they might have for their use of cattle." There remained then ample matter for dispute, and as the parties grew warm, it is to be feared, that there was on both sides a departure from the principles with which both started. The existence of these two parties may be easily traced in the language used in the subsequent deeds from the sachems. Those first procured, were intended to operate as deeds of confirmation of the previous grant to Mr. Williams, establishing a western boundary to it. The party that was not active in procuring them, insisted that they were a fraud upon the natives, as deeds of confirmation, and affected to consider them deeds of new purchases, the consequence of which would be to vest the whole in the proprietors of Providence. A majority of the town, however, accepted them as deeds of confirmation. Pawtuxet purchasers accordingly paid one fourth of the expense of procuring them. In accordance with the extent of land conveyed by these deeds, the town, in March 1660, agreed that their western bounds should be set twenty miles west of Fox's Hill. A committee was appointed to run the western line. At the same time, they also agreed that the dividing line between Providence and Pawtuxet, should be "midway between Wanasquatucket and Pawtuxet, twenty miles." A committee was appointed in April 1661, consisting of Arthur Fenner, William Wickenden and Thomas Hopkins, "to meet three of Pawtuxet men and run the line" "up into



the country, beginning at the tree at Mashapaug." They did not execute their commission till several years afterwards. The next proceeding on the subject was in March 1666, when it was mutually agreed, that "the line of difference shall be run between Providence and Pawtuxet from the end of the line already set near unto Pawchaset river, and from thence upon a straight line to Hypse's rock, if said rock is midway between Pawtuxet and Wanasquatucket, if not, then opposite it, at midway." A committee was appointed, the same day, to run out this line. There is no evidence of any proceedings by them, nor is it to be wondered at, when the agreement did not more exactly define the course to be run. The committee appointed in 1661, reported in January 1668, that they had run the line agreed on from the spring to the marked tree at Mashapaug, and thence "northward to a centre betwixt the two rivers upon an equal distance, near unto a great rock, and from thence westerly upon a straight line near unto Pawchaset river." Their report was accepted by the town in February following. These lines, it will at once be perceived, extend only part of the way between the two proprietries, as Pawtuxet purchasers claimed them to extend. In 1675, another committee was appointed by the town to confer with Pawtuxet men about the dividing line. The result of the conference does not appear in any report, but it did not result in any settlement of the matter in controversy.

Recourse was, in the mean time, in many instances, had to legal process. Suits were institu-



ted in various courts and jurisdictions, for alledged trespasses. These served to arouse private feelings and to enlist them in the disputes, without, in any degree, settling the question out of which they arose. The tribunals in this colony were not so constituted as to be impartial in relation to the matter. It could scarcely happen, that some of the Assistants who composed the highest judicial tribunal then known, would not be interested in the question under debate, though they might not be in the issue on trial. At any rate, the losing party would always have it in his power to shake the confidence in such tribunals, on such matters, where whole communities were, in fact, parties in feeling. In 1650, recourse was had to the courts of Massachusetts. After the subjection of some of the Pawtuxet purchasers, with their lands, to that government, two of them, William Carpenter and Robert Coles, commenced a suit in the county court at Boston, against William Harris, for trespass on Pawtuxet lands. The court entertained jurisdiction over the cause, and gave judgment for the defendant. No one, it is presumed, will now suppose that the courts of that Province ever could have obtained any jurisdiction over the matter in dispute or the defendant in the action, both being many miles beyond their charter lines. Nor was it possible for them to execute their judgments on the land, as their right to the jurisdiction was disputed by this colony.

In June 1677, the difficulties had increased to such a degree, that William Harris one of the Pawtuxet proprietors, undertook a voyage to England



to petition the king for the appointment of special commissioners to hear and determine them. In his petition he gives a summary of the difficulties and dangers that surrounded the Pawtuxet purchase.— He states that he and his twelve partners had purchased the land about forty years before, that their purchase or parts of it, were claimed by the town of Providence, the town of Warwick, the colony of New-Plymouth and two parties of the province of Massachusetts Bay; that they were intruded upon by these claimants, and that although they had sued some of them, they could obtain no redress for their wrongs. The prayer of the petition, was, that the governors of New-Plymouth, Massachusetts, Rhode-Island and Connecticut might be required to hear their complaints themselves, or to appoint such as were just and able men to hear them, and with the aid of a jury equally chosen out of the respective governments to determine all differences concerning the lands at Pawtuxet. All these various claims depended on the extent of the original purchase of Providence. Neither Warwick, New-Plymouth, nor the parties from Massachusetts could maintain their claim against the rightful bounds of Providence, as they were founded on conveyances from the natives subsequent to the purchase by Mr. Williams, and were either included within or were bounded upon, his grant. It has been before stated, that the question between Providence and Pawtuxet depended on the extent of Providence westerly, and the course that the dividing line should run, beyond Mashapaug. The prayer of this petition was grant-



ed, and a commission sent to the four governors.— They appointed commissioners to hear the matters in dispute. These were Thomas Hinckley and James Cudworth, of Plymouth, Simon Lynde and Daniel Henchman, of Massachusetts, George Denison and Daniel Wetherell, of Connecticut, and John Coggeshall and Peleg Sanford, of Rhode-Island. They met at Boston on the third day of October 1677, and empannelled a jury, four of whom belonged to Massachusetts, two to Plymouth, three to Connecticut, and three to Rhode-Island. They then adjourned to Providence, where they met on the 17th day of November. Five cases were then entered and tried before the jury. William Harris, Thomas Field and Nathaniel Waterman were the plaintiffs. The defendants were, John Tours, of Hingham, the town of Warwick, John Harrod and partners, Edmund Calverly, Gregory Dexter, Arthur Fenner and the town of Providence. A paper called the declaration of the plaintiffs in the last named case contains, near the close of it, what was the issue between the parties in that cause ;

“ Whether the said town of Providence should not, with us, run the line agreed on by us for partition between the said rivers Wanasquatucket river and Pawtuxet river, at an equal and even distance, and equally upward into the country, as high as the place or pond, called Punhangansett, the most westerly bound, which is about twelve miles from the most easterly bound set at Providence : and who hath the best right and truest title to the lands on the southward side of the said line.”

On the 21st of November the jury returned a verdict for the plaintiffs for two pounds, damages, and

“ Also that the said defendants run the aforesaid line, equally



between Pawtuxet river and Wanasquatucket river, till they meet a thwart line from the head of Wanasquatucket river, directly running to Pawtuxet river."

The court accepted the verdict and issued three warrants to carry it into effect, one to the Assistants of Providence, requiring them to summon the freemen of Providence to meet and choose a committee to run the lines described in the verdict—one to the town sergeant of Providence, requiring him to give the plaintiffs possession, after the above lines were run, and the third to the Assistants, requiring them to see that the town sergeant delivered possession according to their warrant to him. The court then adjourned to meet at Boston on the 23d of May 1679, "to consult with their respective governors whether they had power to grant execution for the cost of court, &c." and to prepare a report of their proceedings to the king. The commissioners from Connecticut being absent, the court adjourned to the 18th of June, then to meet at Providence. The verdict, as accepted by the court, was far from determining the controversy between the parties. Something was to be done by the defendants; they were to run the very lines which were the foundation of the dispute, and the language of the verdict was so loose and indefinite, as to their length and courses, that there was little probability that they would be run in a manner satisfactory to the plaintiffs. This was the fact. In April the plaintiffs proposed to the town of Providence to appoint surveyors to run the lines. The proposition was not acceded to. At the adjournment on the 18th of



June, the defendants produced a plan showing a line which they affirmed was according to the verdict. It extended from what they supposed to be the head of Wanasquatucket river, to a point in Pawtuxet river where the Pawchasit river empties into it. Providence contended that the line so run was "a thwart line" in the language of the verdict "from the head of Wanasquatucket river directly running to Pawtuxet river." The plaintiffs objected to this line, and refused to accept it as the line the jury intended, as this line made an acute angle and not a direct thwart line or right angle, as they construed the language of the jury to require. The court then "thought it might be most satisfactory to have the former jury themselves, explain their own meaning in their verdict," and adjourned to the first day of October, at which time the jurors were summoned again to appear. At the time of the adjournment only five of the commissioners were present; the next day, the two from Rhode-Island appeared, but one being still absent (Wetherell, of Connecticut,) they withdrew themselves, on the ground that no proceedings could be had unless all the commissioners were present. The remaining five commissioners, taking a different view of their powers, continued in session. All the jurors except the three from Rhode-Island, appeared on the first day of meeting. They did not appear till the second, and then "refused to do any thing as to the explanation of what they intended in their former verdict," alledging that they had previously explained it in writing. The remaining nine jurors explained their meaning



to be as the court had previously declared it and as the plaintiff claimed, and also, on oath, declared to the court, that the jurors from Rhode-Island had concurred with them in this explanation. The commissioners' report is dated the 5th of October 1678.

Mr. Harris made another voyage to England in 1679, and presented a petition to the king, complaining that the judgment remained unexecuted, and that the plaintiffs were still kept out of possession. The magistrates of Rhode-Island were required, by letter dated July 9, 1679, to cause the judgment to be carried into immediate effect. This letter was presented to the governor and assistants in general council, on the 30th of September. They issued an execution on the judgment, reciting the verdict in the words used by the jury, and appointed John Smith, of Newport, the marshal, to execute the same. He made his return to the general council on the 10th day of December, that he had not delivered possession of the lands described in the execution, that he had applied to the plaintiffs for them to point out the lands, but that they had neglected to do so. It seems he spent several days in Providence and Pawtuxet, endeavoring to discharge his duty. It is probable, from his detail of circumstances, that the plaintiffs were determined not to accept possession, except according to their construction of the verdict, and they would not point out the land unless he would run the lines described in the verdict, which he refused to do, because the verdict made that the duty of the defendants. Not disheart-



ened by these rebuffs, in January following, Mr. Harris again embarked for England, with a design of preferring another petition to the king for redress. On his passage he was taken a prisoner, by a Barbary corsair, and carried to Algiers. He remained there more than a year, and was finally ransomed, at the cost of about \$1200. He travelled through Spain and France, reached London, and died a few days after his arrival there. During the whole of this controversy, Mr. Harris had acted as the attorney of the Pawtuxet purchasers, he being also one of them. There existed between him and Mr. Williams, a personal, or what became a personal, controversy, for many years before his death. The origin of it is not known nor whether it grew out of the dispute between the proprietaries, or whether that dispute did not owe to it much of its violence. So far as proceedings were had before courts and juries, Mr. Harris generally succeeded, while Mr. Williams seems to have gained and kept an ascendancy in the affairs of the town. Little is known of the early life of Mr. Harris. He first landed in Boston, and the tradition is that he came in the same ship with Mr. Williams. He left Salem with Mr. Williams, and was one of the first six that crossed the Seekonk. The records do not show that he ever took a leading part in the affairs of the town, or was often called by his fellow townsmen to hold offices. He held the office of Assistant for Providence, for several years, during some of which there was a large number, if not a majority, of the freemen of the town opposed to him. His influence lay in other parts of



the colony. The proceedings commenced against him in the colony, and the complaints urged against him by the town, have heretofore been given in preceding chapters. In defending what he supposed were the rights of Pawtuxet purchasers, he was indefatigable. They were prosecuted with a zeal and industry, and at an expense, which the matter in dispute would hardly seem to justify. The arguments or pleas he made before the commissioners, in 1677 and 1678, are preserved. They exhibit deep thought, and much of the scholastic reasoning, peculiar to that age, but are deficient in that general and classical knowledge which distinguished the learned men of his day. Although he acted throughout the controversy as an attorney for the purchasers, no one, from reading his arguments, would hesitate a moment in determining that he was never educated a lawyer. While they show an intimate acquaintance with the statutes of England, they, at the same time, show that his knowledge of law extended no further than to them. His knowledge of the principles of the common law, so far as it extended, was not derived from books, but from deep reflection and the innate strength of his own mental powers. His perception of them was quick, and his conclusions from them just, wherever he did not permit his prejudices and prepossessions to influence him. He appears to have possessed an ardent temperament, combined with such an uncommon degree of firmness as amounted almost to obstinacy. From the proceedings in the Pawtuxet controversy, it may be doubted



whether this latter principle may not have delayed its termination.

At the time of the third and last voyage to England, and probably before, Mr. Harris was engaged as the agent of Connecticut in urging the claims of that colony to the jurisdiction over the Narragansett country. While this circumstance evinces the respect which that colony had for his talents and integrity, it may account for some of the prejudices against him in Rhode-Island.

It does not appear that any steps were taken, after the death of Mr. Harris, in relation to the settlement of this controversy, until 1682. In November of that year, the town of Providence appointed "five trustees," with full power "to end the difference" with Pawtuxet, and "agree upon the line to be run." They applied themselves to the task, and in January they executed an agreement with the Pawtuxet proprietors, establishing the future line of division between them and Providence. They reported their proceedings to the town in April, and were then instructed to run out the line. Thus far they had perfected nothing. The dividing line had been settled in 1640, by the "combination" signed by the parties. A vote of the town, in 1660, had fixed the course of the line, and finally the jury before the commissioners, in 1677, had directed how the line should run. These trustees had therefore done no more than had been repeatedly done before. They stopped at the very point where the difficulty commenced. It is worthy of remark, however, that the line now agreed upon contract-



ed the limits of the Pawtuxet purchase, far more than either of the preceding ones. By this, it was to extend no farther west than the seven-mile line. The north line was to be run from the spring in the gully at Saxeffrax cove, to Mashapaug, and from thence to a point in the seven-mile line midway between the south bounds of the purchase, and the point where the seven-mile line crossed the Wanasquatucket river. These lines were not run out by the trustees. In fact, they could not be, for the south boundary of the purchase was then in dispute, and the seven-mile line nowhere crosses the Wanasquatucket. There is no reason, notwithstanding this, to doubt the sincerity of the contracting parties. The same trustees were empowered, at the time of their appointment, to settle the difficulties with Warwick. They probably expected then soon to accomplish this. It is no great imputation on them to believe, that the seven-mile line had not been run its whole length northward, nor that the whole course of the Wanasquatucket had not been explored.

The dividing line between Providence and Warwick, so far as related to jurisdiction, was settled by the General Assembly, in October 1696. They decided that the north side of the Pawtuxet river, from the junction of its northern and southern branches, to its mouth, should separate the jurisdiction of the two towns.

In 1707, a new claimant appeared for part of the lands supposed to be within the purchase of Providence. This was the Westquanoid Company.



They claimed all the land lying south of the north branch of the Pawtuxet, under a deed from the natives. This dispute was, however, of short duration. In October 1708, it was agreed between them, that a line should be run due south from the centre of Punhangansett pond, to Warwick north line, and that the dividing line between Providence and West-quanoid, should cross this line at right angles, midway between its extremes. No further difficulty appears to have existed in relation to this line. Like the Pawtuxet controversy, this related solely to title to lands. The jurisdiction of Providence over it was never questioned.

The dividing line between Providence and Pawtuxet had not been run out in 1708. A petition was presented to the purchasers of Providence this year, by one of their number, praying that it might be. In the following year a committee of Pawtuxet purchasers was directed by that body to run it out. It does not appear that either of these attempts went so far as even to agree upon the dividing line, much less to run it out. It slumbered till February 11, 1712, when another agreement was made between a committee of Providence and a committee of Pawtuxet. It recites that the dividing line "was agreed upon in 1682-3, but no bounds set, which left the matter in dispute," and then follows the line at that time agreed upon, varying from all preceding ones, and still further reducing the extent of Pawtuxet purchase, beginning at Mashapaug, and to run west fourteen degrees north, to the seven-mile line, and then due south to Warwick line. The committee



who executed this agreement, in the May following run out the line agreed on, and set up bounds, and this ended the controversy.

Although the proprietors of Providence had occasionally for years previous to 1718, held meetings apart from the town, for the transaction of business relating solely to the lands of the purchase, yet the bodies had but one clerk and one set of records. And in many instances, orders which concern only the propriety, were passed by the town. Little care was taken to keep the line of separation distinct in the records, and hitherto little attention has been paid to it in this and the preceding chapters. It was impossible to do it, without conjecturing from the contents of certain orders and proceedings by which body they were passed. Less ambiguity, it was thought, would arise from this course, than from pursuing the contrary one, and marking out the distinction as the work progressed. In 1713, a dispute arose between the purchasers and town, as to the records, and in the beginning of 1718, the purchasers removed it, by choosing a clerk for their own body and opening a new set of records. Since that time, the records have been kept distinct. The records of the proprietors are divided into two sets, one relating to land to the east, or within the seven-mile line, the other relating to land to the west, or without the same line. This line was first established in 1660. It runs due north and south, seven miles westward of Fox's hill, or Fox point, as it is now called. It is the dividing line between the present towns of Smithfield, Cranston and Johnston on the



east, and Scituate, Gloucester and Burrillville on the west. It originally marked the extent of the early divisions of the lands, westward.

The disputes and difficulties which have heretofore been traced from their rise to their final determination and settlement, related solely to rights of property and soil. The right of jurisdiction over all the land lying between Warwick on the south, Connecticut on the west, Massachusetts on the north, and Pawtucket or Seekonk river on the east, was always admitted to be in Providence. It was all called the township of Providence. Jurisdiction was also claimed over the land which constitutes the present town of Cumberland. This was denied by Plymouth, and afterwards by Massachusetts, and was a matter of contention between the colonies, until 1746, when it was settled by the king in council, and the jurisdiction given to the colony of Rhode-Island.

As settlements increased towards the borders of the township, the inhabitants began to experience the great disadvantages growing out of such extended limits. The meetings of the freemen were holden in the village which was, then, generally styled the town of Providence. Inhabitants living at the extremities of the township were obliged to travel twenty miles or more, to attend them. Municipal regulations, highly necessary for the village, were totally inapplicable to the other parts of the town. The different pursuits too, of the inhabitants, those in the village part being principally traders, mechanics or merchants, and the rest, generally, husbandmen, also required for each, different regulations.



The first, from their situation, would need frequent town-meetings, to make rules and by-laws for their government, and would require expenditures from the public treasury, in which the other would feel and have but little interest. These circumstances naturally produced a desire for a division of the town into separate municipal corporations. In April 1730, a petition was presented to the freemen of the town, in town meeting, praying that the town might be divided into three or more towns. It was assented to at once, and the General Assembly of the colony, at a session in February following, passed an act dividing the town into Providence, Smithfield, Scituate and Gloucester. The bounds of Providence were declared to extend south to Warwick, west to the seven-mile line, on which it measured eight and a half miles, and northward to a line drawn from the weir on Pawtucket river about half a mile north of Pawtucket falls, to the north end of its western boundary on the seven-mile line.

In 1751, upon the petition of some of the inhabitants of Providence, the town of Cranston was set off from the southwesterly part of Providence. By this act the southerly line of Providence was declared to be a straight line from Hawkins' Cove on Providence bay or river, to a bend in Pochasset river, near Charles Dyer's, then to follow the river up to the Plainfield road, then by that road to the seven-mile line. The town of Cranston takes its name from Samuel Cranston, who for many years was governor of the colony. The petition states there were, at this time, 600 freemen in Providence.



In 1759, the township of Johnston was erected, out of the westerly part of Providence. The dividing line begins on the southern bank of Wanasquatucket river, due north from the easternmost part of Solitary Hill, and runs thence due south to the northern line of Cranston. From the place of beginning, the line north, is the Wanasquatucket river. This town was named after Augustus Johnston, at that time attorney general of the colony.

The township of Providence still consisted of a large area of land and contained a large number of inhabitants. The compact part had been empowered for some years to meet and assess themselves for the purchase of fire engines, which the proximity and materials of their dwellings made necessary. In 1763, engine men were elected as town officers.—In 1764, a town watch was agreed upon. Several grants of lotteries for the paving of the streets had been obtained. In all these improvements, those inhabitants who were without the compact parts of the town had little interest. They felt it, therefore, an unnecessary burden to contribute towards them, and even the attendance upon the town meetings necessarily and frequently called in relation to such improvements was no small tax upon them. Induced by these or some other reasons, one hundred and fifteen of the inhabitants in the northerly part of the township preferred a petition to the General Assembly at their February session, 1765, to be set off into a town by the name of Wenscutt. They proposed that the dividing line between Providence and Wenscutt should run from the southernmost point



where the line of Johnston meets the Wanasquatucket river, by that river to the northwest corner of the town's land east of Forestack meadow, thence to the middle of Mill Bridge, and thence due east to Seekonk river. In their petition they stated the number of freemen in Providence to be upwards of four hundred, and that about one hundred and sixty of them resided in the part proposed to be set off.— This petition was continued till the next session and a citation ordered to the town of Providence. At the same February session, a counter petition, signed by twenty-nine of the “inhabitants of the northern part of Providence,” was also presented. This petition charges, “that divers persons, inhabitants of the same part of the town of Providence in which we dwell, have been instigated and set on by crafty and designing men to desire of this Assembly that the said town of Providence may be again divided into two towns, in such a manner and by such boundaries as are directly calculated to serve the interested views and purposes of such instigators,” and prays to be heard against that petition. The charges in this petition may probably be traced to the high spirit of party which characterised the Ward and Hopkins era in the colony. The first signer of the petition for dividing the town was Elisha Brown, one of the most active and influential partisans of Gov. Ward in the north part of the colony. The signers of that petition were probably mostly Ward men, and the signers of the other, Hopkins men. The line proposed for a dividing line, evidently shows that some ulterior object was sought after in the di-



vision, for it passed through the compact part of the town. It was not so drawn as to separate the agricultural from the mercantile part of the community, but it is fair to conjecture, that as it embraced the residence of Elisha Brown, it set off with him, as the town of Wenscutt, so many other partizans of Gov. Ward as would secure the election of representatives to the General Assembly favorable to Gov. Ward. He had that year, 1765, succeeded against Gov. Hopkins, and this seems to have been resorted to as a means of perpetuating his power in the colony, and perhaps of rewarding some of his faithful adherents, by the multiplication of offices.— There is no evidence that any citation ever issued to the town of Providence on this petition; on the contrary, it is expressly stated in a protest signed by the deputies of Providence, that none had been issued or served. The petition however was granted, at the June session 1765, and the dividing line established as prayed for, but the name of the new town was changed from Wenscutt to North Providence. At a town meeting in August, a committee was appointed by the town of Providence to remonstrate against the division, and in November the deputies were instructed to procure a re-union. All efforts proved ineffectual, while Gov. Ward's party prevailed in the colony. In April 1767, Gov. Hopkins secured the ascendancy, and in June following the southern bounds of North Providence were established as they now exist, commencing at the same point, following Wanasquatucket river to the southerly end of Forestack meadow, thence to the



northwest corner of the burying ground, thence easterly and southerly by said burying ground to Harrington's lane, thence easterly by the north side of that lane to the southwest corner of Joseph Olney's land, thence south across the said lane, thence easterly by the south side of that lane to the dividing line between land of William and Phineas Brown, and by that dividing line to Seekonk river.

This is the last town that was severed from the original lands of Providence. The interests of the compact and agricultural parts of the township required the divisions which had been made. The original town, under any circumstance, was altogether too extensive to be embraced in one municipal corporation. Some of the towns so severed from Providence have been since divided into other towns. Thus the original town of Scituate, so named by the first settlers of it, from the town of Scituate in Massachusetts, from which many of them came, has been divided into Scituate and Foster, the last town taking its name from Theodore Foster, formerly one of the senators from this state in the Congress of the United States. The town of Gloucester, so called from the Duke of Gloucester, has been divided into Gloucester and Burrillville.—The latter town derives its name from James Burrill, jun., formerly attorney general and afterwards chief justice of the state, and senator in Congress. The town of Cumberland, which was annexed to the county of Providence by decision of the king in council in 1746, was so called in compliment to Prince William, Duke of Cumberland.



The several divisions of Providence have rather accelerated than diminished her prosperity. While the younger branches of the family have been rapidly increasing in population and wealth, the parent stock retains all the freshness and vigor of youth. As she parted with a large proportion of her outlands as portions for her several daughters, her attention has been gradually and necessarily turned from agriculture to commerce and manufactures. The same enterprising spirit which enabled the first settlers successfully to combat all the difficulties of their wilderness situation, and to force from a comparatively lean and unproductive soil, both sustenance and comfort, when directed in succeeding times to commerce, led the way to China and the East Indies, and whitened every sea with her canvass.

The area of Providence is about six square miles. Its form is irregular, and its surface diversified with hills and dales. The two rivers, Moshassuck and Wanasquatucket, unite in the town and form Providence harbor or river, into which the Pawtucket empties itself, at Fox Point. The land on the west of the Moshassuck, is generally light and sandy; the highest part of it, Jefferson plains, is seventy-six feet above tide-water. East of the Moshassuck, the soil is a heavy loam, underlaid with slate and grey wacke. The highest point of it is two hundred and four feet above tide-water. This is just north of Olney street, in the range of the Dexter Asylum and the Friends' school.



## CHAPTER ELEVENTH.

### MISCELLANEOUS.

In this chapter it is designed to embody various facts and traditions connected with the town of Providence, which could not easily be embraced in either of the foregoing chapters.

In answer to a circular, craving information, the author received a long and very interesting letter from Samuel Thurber, one of our oldest and most respectable citizens, since deceased. As this is the only answer he received, although the circular was sent to many persons, such parts of it will here be given, as have not already been embodied in this work.

SIR—Your request for information concerning circumstances and things appertaining to this town, I cannot answer agreeable to my desire, by reason of having been permitted to outlive my memory or recollection, in a very considerable degree, being now in my 81st year. I will endeavor, however, to recollect, then must take things as they occur, therefore you must not expect accuracy or uniformity. Should I happen to state any thing worth your notice, make such use of it as you think may be beneficial.

Changes in the face of the soil, in this town, are hardly visible, excepting near the streets, where the improvement or change is great. The time is within my recollection when there were not more than six or eight buildings on Benefit street, and no street over the hill excepting that called Jail-lane. The old jail, standing on the north side of it, was one of the buildings.



All carriages going to or from the east part of the town, passed through Olney's lane, or through a street quite at the south part of the town. At that time I think I had some knowledge of nearly every family in town. As respects the river, I doubt whether the tide covers half the ground it did seventy years since; wharves first built, then Water streets beyond the wharves, acres filled or raised south of Weybosset and Broad streets. Where Westminster street is, and all north of it, the tide flowed. I am told that there was a knoll, or small round hill, near the head of what is now called the Long wharf, which at that time was an island. Old people have often told me of having picked berries on it. An old man long since told me that while there was difficulty with the Indians, several of them got slyly upon that hill and fired at a small company of white young men who were playing at nine pins, near where the court house now stands, and hit one of their pins. I am told that the first vessel which sailed from this town for the West Indies, was loaded at a wharf that was then a little to the westward of the canal market. I once saw a vessel of about thirty or forty tons, a fisherman, unloading at a wharf then adjoining to what is now called Smith street. Many vessels of large burthen have been built on the west side of what is called the canal basin, and at other places north of the great bridge, which bridge I believe was fifty or sixty feet longer than it now is. There was a draw in it, for the purpose of letting vessels through. The channel, I think, is now covered by Water street. As respects schools, previous to about the year 1770, they were but little thought of; there were in my neighborhood, three small schools, perhaps about a dozen scholars in each. Their books were, the bible, spelling book and primer. One kept by John Foster, Esq. in his office; one by Dr. Benjamin West. Their fees were seven shillings and sixpence per quarter. One kept by George Taylor, Esq. for the church scholars. He, it was said, received a small compensation from England. Besides these, there were two or three women schools. When one had learned to read, write, and do a sum in the rule of three, he was fit for business. About this time, Dr. Jonathan Arnold made a move for building a proprietors' school house; by his exertions he obtained enough to build one at the norther-



ly end of Benefit street, which was called Whipple Hall, in consequence of Mr. Joseph Whipple giving the lot for two shares. George Taylor, jr. was the first master. The town, a few years since, bought the proprietors out.

At a time many years since, I fell in with an old gentleman standing viewing what was called the old Turpin house. He says to me, I am taking a view of the old house where the General Assembly used to sit; I have been there and should like to go in to see whether it looks as it did formerly. I went in with him; after looking round, he says, it is much as it was. This house then was standing on the west side of North Main street, nearly opposite to the Fourth Baptist meeting house. It appears that in the days of Turpin, the original owner, this was a very sightly place, and a place of considerable business. He had a large yard with an elm tree in it, a fine garden, handsomely fenced in, through which there ran a small brook, which came from a small swamp, laying a little to the eastward of where the meeting-house now is.

The Rev. John Graves, the church priest, from England, was I believe a very pious man. As he was sent over under the pay of that government, his piety obliged him to attend to his engagement, consequently his hearers left him and employed another. After the king had acknowledged our independence, he considered himself discharged from that quarter, then offered, as I was told to officiate as an American, but could not be re-instated. He died soon after. The Rev. Joseph Snow, was a truly worthy man, one it is said, who had done much for his society, and who, after becoming old, was slipped aside. The old gentleman died with grief. The Rev. Samuel Winsor was a worthy, plain Baptist preacher, and was a very useful man. The Rev. James Manning did great things in the way of enlightening and informing the people. Schools revived by means of his advice and assistance. Previous to him it was not uncommon to meet with those who could not write their names.

Doctors Joseph Hewes, Ephraim Bowen, and Jonathan Arnold, all at the same time, were our most eminent physicians. Arnold, at the commencement of the revolutionary war, took charge of the hospital, and there continued until the peace in



1783. He afterwards went as a member to Congress. He finally made a settlement in Vermont, and there died.

As for lawyers, I never had much to do with them, as I ever had a contemptible opinion of their trade. I however will relate from information, an instance. There was a man who I recollect of once seeing, by the name of John Aplin. It is said that he was a man of learning and of a good address, a poor Englishman. He found friends who put him forward. He soon became popular, and acquired a handsome estate. He, like some others of the trade, became very avaricious. A very important case presented, both sides wanted him, he so engaged, and received a fee from each. This was discovered; he consequently, between two days, up keleg and scud for Connecticut. I doubt whether he was ever in Rhode-Island afterwards. He had six sons; one of them, by the name of Joseph, was educated to the same trade. He was a tory, and went off to the British. I dont know that either of them is now living, or that there is an inch of their property in the name.

Manners and fashions were very plain. The dress in general was meant to be durable. Men mostly with wash-leather breeches; cloth for most purposes, generally manufactured in their families; laborers of almost every description with leather aprons; the best dress of the most opulent, was of English manufacture, in a plain style. Some who were a little flashy, would wear a cocked hat, a wig, or a powdered head, their hair clubbed or queued; sometimes would buy or borrow some for the purpose of giving the club or queue the better appearance. Women of the same neighborhood would visit each other with a clean checked apron, a striped loose gown, a handkerchief over the shoulders, and a sun bonnet; then pleasantly sit down and divert themselves over a dish of bohea tea and a piece of bread and butter. A few who considered themselves somewhat superior, would wear a silk or calico gown, with long ruffle cuffs, a lawn apron, a little roll over the head, resembling a crupper to a saddle, with the hair smoothly combed over it, a flat chip hat, with a crown about one inch deep, all covered with a thin silk, some black, some white, others red, green, &c. &c. Young men would at times amuse themselves in the lots, at ball, shooting



at poultry or at a mark, now and then at wrestling or jumping ; at times muster in small parties with young women, then have a dance ; at harvest time, would go miles to a husking, as the farmers generally would at that time make merry. At the season for pigeons, there was too much diversion in destroying them. There were many stands set up around our cove, by means of which thousands were annually destroyed by shooting. In the country they were mostly taken in nets, and brought to market by horse loads, in panniers. A man told me that he at a time carried a load in that way to Boston, that they were so plenty that he could not sell them, neither give them away ; he thought that there might be those who had rather steal than to have it thought they were beggars, so set his panniers down by the side of a street, there left them for awhile ; when he returned, he found many more than he had left.

Captain Jabez Whipple, who lately died in his one hundredth year, told me, that when a young man, he, with several others, kept a pack of hounds, with which they would at times divert themselves in a fox chase ; that at a time they followed one, most of the day, at evening they holed him, then made a fire at the hole in order to keep him in during the night ; they came with tools for digging, went to work, and soon found him, suffocated, as they supposed, took him out, handed him from one to the other, with every appearance of being dead, so threw him on the ground, when he instantly took to his toes, and so gave them another day's chase.

As for particular places of resort, I can hardly say that I know of any ; the great bridge was a considerable of a place for it, at a pleasant time. Captain Joseph Olney kept the principal public house. As the town increased, it settled the fastest nearer the tide water. Col. Knight Dexter, opened a public house where the people could be more conveniently accommodated ; this and other houses being opened for the same purpose, drew the custom from the old place, so that it became abandoned. Elisha Brown, at a time was doing a very considerable business to the northward of Capt. Olney's, near Joseph Turpin's. To him there was great electioneering resorting. For several seasons party ran high between Samuel Ward, of Newport, and Stephen



Hopkins, of this town. No one more zealously engaged in the cause than Brown, for Ward, and for himself as Deputy Governor. His zeal, I believe, was rather expensive, as he left to his family near nothing, of a good estate.

The first coach that I ever saw, and I do not know but the first one that was ever in this town, was owned by a Mr. Merritt, an Englishman, who came and purchased the farm and built the house where the venerable Moses Brown lately died, in his 99th year. This coach would once in a while come into the street by way of Olney's lane, then there would be a running of the children, and a looking from the windows, to see the new wonderful thing. About this time, there would be, now and then, a person who wanted a passage to Boston. Col. William Brown, who lived quite at the north east corner of the town, on a farm, kept what was called a curricie, drawn by two horses; he would be their carrier. It would take him about three days to go and return. After awhile, Thomas Sabin, I think, was the first that set up a stage; he generally went once a week. After him, Robert Currey, then Samuel Whipple; when they got through by day light, they thought to have done well. The mail was carried by a Mr. Mumford, on horseback, once a week, between this and New-London, and so back. May, 1776, I went to Pomfret, thirty-six miles, in a chaise; the road was so stony and rough, that I could not ride out of a slow walk, but very little of the way; I was near two days in going, such was the general state of our roads at that time.

Eminent men, I can refer to whom they were, the world knows them, a Washington, a Franklin, a Lafayette, together with all who composed our first Congress, then will add seven eighths at least of New-England men. The object and design of the great majority at that time was the same. They were ready and willing to make any and every sacrifice that should benefit the great whole. But very few such at this time; now the most eminent men are those who sacrifice the general good to the interest of selected individuals. The arch deceiver did not in former days receive such polite addresses as they now do. The fair, plain, honest man, although in moderate circumstances, was then the most eminent.



At a time, I saw an old lady walking over the great bridge with a cane in her hand. I asked a bystander who she was. He said old Mrs. Eddy, that she is now more than one hundred years old. After which, I heard that she died, at about one hundred and five. A Mr. Miller died about the same time, at about the same age. I was at Newport not long since, there I saw a man who said he was one hundred years and one month old that day ; he was very intelligent, and has since died. John Sayles is said to have lived more than one hundred years. Mr. Richard Brown, who lived in the north east corner of this town, and died some twenty years since, on his century day was so cheery that his family presented him with a violin, which in his young days he had been somewhat attached to ; he had not lost the use of it ; he died before the year expired.

September, 1828, I visited the asylum in New-York, with one of their aldermen ; there I saw many old people ; among them one who it was said would be one hundred and eight years of age, should he live until the December following. From his appearance, I thought him to be the youngest of those who it was said were over seventy. As I doubted, I questioned him. He was so intelligent and correct in all his answers, that I more doubted, and said to the keeper that it was impossible. He said that he, with their chaplain, who was an aged Englishman, had been of my opinion, which had occasioned a close interrogation, after which they were obliged to believe he was correct. I afterwards saw the same alderman, and enquired concerning the old man. He told me, that in the spring following, he desired to go to his son who lived in or near to Canada, that if they would set him on as far as Albany, he would then find his way to his son's. He was set on, as requested.

I think that you will be able to collect more particular information on war affairs from others than I can give, still should you think that I can give particular information on that subject, I will do what I can, though you must not expect any thing of consequence, from me. With respect sir, yours,

S. THURBER.

On a review I must scribble out a little more.—Business and occupation was similar to what it now is, except machine manu-



facturing. Furniture in general was very plain, mahogany was but little known. Almost every article of wood was straight, without much paint or polish. But little crockery, and that of a coarse kind. Pewter and wood were the principal table furniture. Two would be often eating out of the same dish, and perhaps a dozen drinking out of the same pewter quart pot or earthen mug.

In my youngest days there were but few carriages besides carts, consequently when women wanted to go abroad it was very common for them to go on horseback, sitting on a pillion behind a man. Women would often be at market on horseback, with a pair of panniers, selling butter, cheese, eggs, &c.

The time hath been when an abundance of bass and perch, particularly bass, were taken through the ice on Seekonk river, in the night season. About fifty years since, I was there with perhaps a dozen or twenty others. That night there were several tons taken, the most that was ever known to be taken in one night. Since then some would be taken every winter, until lately, that business seems to be about done. It is supposed that the filth washing from the abundance of cotton mills, prevents their coming into the river.

S. T.

The rising generation will not have so good times as the latter have had. What wars and trouble we have had, have been but a trifle to what are to be."

It is seldom one can meet with such a man as was Mr. Thurber. He expresses doubts as to the accuracy of some of his statements, and he is the only man who will. His uniform correctness had by no means forsaken him, at the time of writing the foregoing letter. Few men could remember so well as he has, and few had the extent of local knowledge he possessed.

In 1768, the house kept by Joseph Olney, was one of the most fashionable houses of the time. The neighborhood was the seat of business. Not only the General Assembly, but the courts, were holden



at the old Turpin house. The house of Mr. Aplin is still standing, a little north of this house, on the other side of the street. The lower story of the "long brick house," on the east side of North Main street, was formerly occupied for English and West India goods stores. The house of Gov. Brown is still standing, on the same side of the street, a little east of the street, just north of the long brick house. After the Joseph Olney tavern was given up, the Montgomery tavern was erected, between North Main and Stampers street, at the top of Constitution hill. It took its name from the likeness of General Montgomery, which hung conspicuous on the sign. After the revolution, it was kept by Major Simeon Thayer, an officer of the revolution, who deserved more than he obtained, for his services to his country at Mud-fort.

Alexander Thorp and Isaac Cushno petitioned the General Assembly, at their October session, 1736, for the exclusive right to run a stage to the Massachusetts. The record does not show the precise points to and from which it was to run. The petition was granted, the right to continue for seven years. A committee of the assembly was appointed to prescribe the terms. Then it was probably looked upon as a great undertaking, equal to that of constructing a rail-road or a canal in modern times. Probably this stage, if it ever run, went from Newport to Boston. The first stage coach from Providence to Boston, is referred to by Mr. Thurber, in his letter. That was before the establishment of a newspaper at Providence.



In July 1767, we meet with the first advertisement of a regular stage coach running between Providence and Boston. At that date, Thomas Sabin advertises, that "one starts every Tuesday morning from the house of Richard Olney, inn-holder, to carry travellers to Boston, on the most expeditious and cheap rate." The coach returned on Thursday mornings. Richard Olney's house was nearly opposite the court house parade, on North Main street. The notice does not state whether the coach went through in a day, or stopped the first night at Wrentham, as it did, according to tradition, in earlier times. In those times, it is said that the owner of a stage coach occasionally gave notice a week or ten days before-hand, that on a given day, he would start for Boston, if sufficient encouragement offered, taking care to give notice so that his passengers could settle all their worldly affairs and make their wills, before commencing such an arduous and dangerous journey. Previous to this, in 1763, Joshua Hacker and Benjamin Lindsey advertised a line of two boats to ply between Providence and Newport, twice a week, and oftener, if possible, with freight and passengers. In 1783, the stage to Boston run twice a week. Then, it had ceased to be a seven-days wonder to see a man who had been to New-York. The line of packets, which soon after plied between Providence and New-York, excited the admiration of passengers. In speed and accommodations, they were said to be equal to any in the world. These continued almost to engross the travel between New-York and Providence, Boston



and the other towns east, until the erection of the New-London turnpike, in about 1820. Travellers found it quite refreshing to their aching limbs, after being shook in the stage coaches of those days, to get into the luxurious cabin of a Providence and New-York packet. This, it should be borne in mind, was before stage coaches were the easy vehicles they subsequently became. Strength and durability were then the pervading ideas of their builders and owners. Although the roads had lost their original corduroy character, they had not acquired that level smoothness which invited sleep. An occasional rock or stump would try the strength of the carriage and the patience of the traveller. Connected with the stage coaches over the New-London turnpike, was a line of steamboats from New-London to New-York. The more ample accommodation of these over the packets, but above all, the certainty that attends their movements, gave this mode a decided preference over the preceding one, and the splendid packets soon became mere freight vessels. About the same time, Captain Elihu S. Bunker, in the steamboat Connecticut, came from New-York to Providence, around Point Judith. Thus, it was ascertained by actual experiment, that a steamer could pass that fearful Point. Before that event, it was deemed impossible. Still, some time elapsed before the travelling public could be induced to patronize the steamers round the Point. Several successful voyages destroyed their doubts, and in turn the New-London turnpike and the New-London steamers were abandoned. The Point Judith



steamers were supposed to possess unequalled facilities for the traveller. Speed, certainty, safety and ease, combined to render them the favorites of the public. The facts just stated, show how fickle that public is, and how successive improvements have drawn attention and patronage from the modes of conveyance which preceded them. So it was with steamers. On the completion of the New-York, Providence and Boston railroad, leading from Providence to Stonington, a portion of public favor was withdrawn from the steamers.

The great thoroughfare between Boston and New-York, has always been through Providence. In early times, the traveller passed on horse-back from Providence through East-Greenwich, Wickford, over Tower Hill, and through Westerly into Connecticut. This was the regular route to New-York. It also was the only direct road from Providence to Connecticut, for many years after the settlement of Providence. It is said that the first team from Connecticut, by any road further north, arrived in Providence on the 29th September 1722, and was driven by Governor Sessions. Until about that period, the usual road to that state was through the towns first named. So late as 1776, little could be said in favor of the road leading from Providence to Pomfret. Mr. Thurber, in his letter, states that in May of that year, he was nearly two days in going only thirty-six miles.

As some may be curious to know the expense of travelling in early times, I annex the following charge, extracted from the account book of Richard Brown :



“Oct. the 25, 1737, Mary Tillinghast Dr.

For the use of my mare, the three days last past,  
a journey to East Greenwich, and carrying double  
on said mare, £0,12,0.”

On the first of the first month 1746, the town “agreed that John Smith should have the valley where his house stands, in case he set up a mill, as also excepting, sufficient highways.” This valley comprehended all the land between the west bank of the Moshassuck river and the hill to the east of Jefferson plains, from Smith street on the south to Orms street on the north. Charles street, now passes along this valley. The grantee, after this, generally had the title of “miller” appended to his name to distinguish him from other purchasers.—Even in those early times and in this small community, the name of “John Smith” seemed not to designate any particular individual. Four out of the one hundred and one original proprietors of Providence had equal title to it. One was called John Smith the miller, and sometimes John Smith senior, one John Smith the mason, one John Smith Jamaica, and the other John Smith Junior. Soon after this grant, he set up a grist mill in the valley, near where the first stone lock of the Blackstone canal now is. The property of the water privilege is still in the descendants of the first grantee. They continued to improve it for a grist-mill until the erection of the Blackstone canal. Some years after this, the town commenced a suit at law against them, on the ground that the original grant, and some subsequent acts of the town, and “the miller,” obliged them not



only to "set up," but to keep in repair, a grist-mill through all time. The heirs succeeded in repelling this claim, after a long and expensive litigation.—The surplus water at this privilege has been used for various purposes, during this time. A carding machine, clothier's works, oil works, a cotton factory, a machine shop, a furnace, a fulling mill, and a machine for making blankets, have, at different times within the memory of the author, been operated by it.

Under date of the 4th of the third month (May) 1651, is a record of a coroner's inquest holden on the body of Margaret Goodwin, wife of Adam Goodwin. The jury consisted of twelve, and their ver- was that "either the terribleness of the crack of thunder, or the coldness of the night, being she was naked, did kill her." She had been insane, as appears by a previous record.

On the 28th of July, of the same year, the town meeting determined that all common highways should be four rods wide. We have great reason to regret that this act had not been rigidly enforced.

In January 1662, a Mr. Hackleton applied to the town for liberty to burn lime and to take stone and wood from the commons for that purpose. This is the earliest notice of the manufacture of that important article. By "the commons," is to be understood, all lands lying within the purchase, not appropriated by any particular person. The request was granted for a limited time. In 1665, the attention of the town was again called to the lime-rock within their limits. In October, they ordered "that those lime rocks about Hackleton's lime kiln shall



perpetually be common and that no land shall be laid out on the north-east or south-east of said kiln, within six poles, nor upon the other sides or parts of the said kiln, within sixty poles; this said kiln being at or near a place called Scoakequanoisett." In the following year the town ordered that lime-rock, should continue common whenever any surveyor should discover it in any quantity, but like many similar orders passed in those days and since, it was soon disregarded, and lime-rock land divided, like all other. There can be little doubt, that the interests of the public have been as well, if not better served, than if these rocks had remained undivided.

No trace can be found of the first establishment of a Post Office in Providence. In 1758, reference is made to Samuel Chase, as the then Postmaster. This is the first mention of the matter in any of the records. Letters Patent were granted by William and Mary, in 1691, to Thomas Neal, to erect and establish "an office or offices, for the receiving and dispatching letters and packets" in America, for twenty one years. The rates of postage were to be settled by the colonies. As early as 1793, the province of Massachusetts, on the petition of Andrew Hamilton, the deputy of Thomas Neal, established rates of postage. From Boston to Rhode-Island it was fixed at six-pence for every single letter. No corresponding act was ever passed by the legislature of the colony of Rhode-Island, nor any act from which the existence of a public post can be inferred, except only a provision that the King's post



shall pass all ferries free of ferriage. The amount of postage was regulated by act of parliament, in 1711. William Goddard succeeded Mr. Chace as Postmaster. He subsequently resigned in 1769, and was succeeded by John Cole, and he by John Carter in 1772. Mr. Carter held the office until after the adoption of the constitution of the United States, in 1790. William Wilkinson was appointed soon after that event, and removed in 1802, during President Jefferson's administration. Dr. Benjamin West succeeded Mr. Wilkinson, and held the office till his death, in 1813, when the office was given to his son-in-law, Gabriel Allen, who also held it until his death in 1824. Bennett H. Wheeler was his successor.—He was removed in 1831, by President Jackson, and was succeeded by the present incumbent, Edward J. Mallett.

In May 1774, a plan was laid before the American public in the newspapers, for establishing a new American Post Office. It stated that the previous establishment had been set up by a private gentleman in the Southern States, that in the 9th year of Queen Anne, the Government of Great Britain took it into their hands, and that the income of the establishment in 1774, was £3,000. It proposed the formation of a joint stock company, to establish and maintain a Post Office. The subscribers, in each colony, to appoint seven from among themselves, who should have power to appoint postmasters and regulate mails and postage. These committees were to be authorised to appoint a postmaster general who should adjust the accounts of all postmasters,



divide surplus of receipts over expenses, and assess deficiencies, on the committee of each colony, in proportion to the amount of subscriptions. Mr. Goddard was very active in favor of this project, if not the author of it. It was never carried into effect.

In June 1775, the General Assembly established post riders and Post Offices in Providence, Newport, Bristol, Warren, Tower Hill, South Kingstown and Westerly. A committee of that body were entrusted with the general oversight and care of the Post Office establishment. Rates of postage for single letters, were, for not over 60 miles, 5 $\frac{3}{4}$  pence, for 60 and not over 100, 8 pence, for 100 and not over 200, 10 pence, for 200 and not over 300, 14 pence. In August following, a mail started from Providence for New London on every Tuesday afternoon to return as soon as may be. John Lassell was the post rider at the rate of \$85 per year. Benjamin Mumford rode from Newport to Cambridge, starting every Monday, at five in the afternoon. This arrangement continued but a short time. A Continental Post Office was soon established. Mr. Mumford then succeeded Mr. Lassell. He received his appointment from William Goddard, Surveyor of Post Offices.

The following notice is copied from the Gazette of August 15, 1767 :

"Yesterday, a few gentlemen in this town made a great feast for the poor. There was a general invitation of all the objects of this liberality, besides a special invitation to many. A hog of 120 lbs. was provided, half a sheep, and a lamb, and other provisions, at Carpenter's Point."

It was a pic nic on a large scale, and unique, as



it respects guests. The place has seen many parties since, but probably none more replete with pleasure than this.

The same paper, in December following, announces as a fact, that "three young ladies, daughters of a gentleman of fortune, in the neighborhood of this town, have lately clothed themselves in garments of their own spinning." The spinning wheel was not so old fashioned then, as now. A short time after this, it is also recorded, in the same paper, "that a number of young ladies, daughters of liberty and industry, assembled at the Rev. Mr. Rowland's, with their spinning wheels, and at night presented him with 1,020 knots of thread." If these things really took place as stated, there has been a great change in some matters and things. Since the erection of cotton mills and the introduction of spinning machines, young ladies are not seen carrying their spinning wheels to their minister's house, and dining his ears with their hum-drum noise.

There were some golden dreams, however, in those days ; all was not dry matter-of-fact bone labor. The project portrayed in the following petition, has haunted the imaginations of many since, and it will probably be the means of as much anticipated pleasure and wealth to future generations, as it has been to those that are past.

To the Honorable General Assembly, to be held at East-Greenwich on the last Monday of February, 1768.

The petition of Samuel Jackson Cooper, Richard Jackson, John Updike, Merchants, all of Providence, in the county of Providence, humbly sheweth :

That they are about to dig after pitcoal, commonly called sea-



coal, in the town of Providence, and make an effectual trial if there be any coals there or not; that they are induced to make this experiment from the many natural appearances and marks of coal which have occurred to such as are skilled in coal mines, and after the most deliberate view of their undertaking, they find some encouragement in their proceeding, although the experiment will be attended with great expense. If any large quantity should be discovered, it would certainly be of great benefit to the colony, as fire wood grows scarce and consequently dear, and no seacoal, as yet discovered, in these parts. The place where the bed of coal is supposed to lie, is in the hill at the back of the town, from whence it might be put on board of vessels, with great ease and advantage. It might become a great staple, and bring immense sums of money into the colony, which would be distributed primarily amongst a multitude of laborers, who must necessarily be employed in carrying on the business, and from their hands, be circulated through the government. It might be the means of bringing into the government, a number of vessels from the neighboring colonies, with such necessary articles, to trade off for coal, as at present we are obliged to send after, and can procure no other way, than by a considerable loss in trade. The petitioners humbly conceive, that if they had a monopoly of the whole business, they could not derive any more advantage to themselves, than a moderate compensation for their trouble in managing the business and directing the operations of the laborers, but the principal advantages arising from the business would accrue to the public, and be equally distributed. The petitioners are confident, that the legislature of the colony will constantly attend to and countenance every species of business or manufacture, that will have a tendency to bring the balance of trade into our favor, or that will in any way be to the emolument of the colony. With these ideas, they humbly pray the Assembly to grant unto them, their heirs and assigns, a patent under the great seal of the colony, for the sole vending, disposing and exporting all seacoal or pit-coal or by whatsoever other name the same may be called, which may be found by them in the town of Providence, and that no other person or persons be permitted to sell or export any coal found in said town of Providence for the term of fourteen



years after the petitioners shall discover coal ; or grant them some other encouragement for their undertaking a business of so great expense, and which in event may prove of universal benefit, as your honors may see fit. The petitioners being ready to give sufficient security that they will make an effectual experiment within three years, and that, if coals should be found in sufficient quantities, they will supply the markets at a much cheaper rate, than can be imported from abroad, or surrender up their patent. And they will ever pray &c.

The prayer of this petition was granted, and a patent ordered to be issued under the seal of the colony. Whether they commenced operations or not, I have not been able to ascertain. The hill referred to, shows that some persons, at some time, have sought for wealth beneath its surface.

The transit of Venus, on the third day of June 1769, was observed at Providence, by Benjamin West and Joseph Brown, assisted by Stephen Hopkins, Moses Brown, Jabez Bowen, Joseph Nash and John Burrough. This phenomenon occurs but twice in a century. It affords conclusive data for determining some of the most intricate and important questions in astronomy. The transit of this planet, in 1761, had been observed in all parts of the civilized world. It was desirable that the same event, occurring in 1769, should also be observed by many persons, in different parts of the earth, and with great exactness. In prospect of its near approach, all the necessary instruments were obtained. No expense was spared in procuring them, or in making the necessary arrangements. Dr. West states, in an account of the proceedings which he afterwards published, that Mr. Brown expended



more than £100 sterling, in making these preparations. A temporary observatory was erected in the street, since then, and from this circumstance called Transit street, about one hundred feet east of Benefit street. Here, on the morning of the third of June, were collected not only the gentlemen before named, but many others; some attracted by curiosity merely, and some by their love of science. The day proved calm and serene. Not a cloud intervened to obstruct their observation, but every circumstance contributed to facilitate it. The account published by Dr. West, bore ample testimony to his science as an astronomer. Compared with other observations, even with those made under the patronage of crowned heads in Europe, it maintains a high place for its accuracy.

Notwithstanding the political dangers and difficulties with which the colonies were surrounded in 1772, the inhabitants of Providence found leisure to form and perfect plans for their present comfort, and for the future well-being of the town. That part of the town since called Eddy's Point, was formerly an island, and was connected with the main land by an artificial embankment. It had been found a very convenient place for business, excepting only a want of fresh water for the supply of the inhabitants. In that year they formed a company for the purpose of supplying themselves with this necessary article, by an aqueduct from the main land, and obtained a charter of incorporation from the General Assembly. Capt. John Field, the owner of land adjoining, upon which there was a large and perma-



nent spring of good water, generously gave one half of it to the company for nine hundred and ninety-nine years. Operations were immediately commenced by Joseph Bucklin and Nicholas Clark, and in four months they completed the undertaking, carrying the water nearly three-fourths of a mile, in logs. The aqueduct was supposed capable of supplying one hundred gallons per minute. In a letter of thanks addressed to Captain Field on the 26th of August, after the work was completed, they say, "we are supplied with fresh water in a more convenient manner than any of the inhabitants of the colony: and, to use the language of scripture, our situation was, before, pleasant, though our waters were nought; but, now, through your bounty and beneficence, we have at command a spring shut up, or fountain, opened at pleasure." In October following the "Rawson's Fountain Society," was incorporated. The fountain of this corporation was dug in land of the heirs of the late Stephen Rawson. It was thirty feet in length, thirteen and a half feet wide, and about ten feet deep. The main pipe was four inches bore and about four hundred rods in length. The undertakers of this work, were Amos Atwell and Jonathan Ellis. The logs were bored by machinery invented by them.

Since that period, two other fountains have been built on the west side of the river. The one belonging to the Providence Aqueduct Company, is located near the junction of Stewart and Conduit streets.—The water is conveyed from it in a double range of four inch iron pipes, a part of which was laid at



great expense, the excavation for the same, varying from four to thirty-one feet in depth. The pipes from this fountain were extended at first across the river, and under its bed. They were broken while erecting the bridge, and have not since been replaced.

The other fountain is located between Fountain and Cottage streets, a little to the east of Dean street. The main pipe at the fountain is five inches in diameter. The head is sufficient to deliver water in the third story of the Union buildings, next the bridge.

These four fountains, supply a greater part of the inhabitants on the west side of the river, whose dwellings are near the salt water, with pure and wholesome water. They are owned by different companies, and the right to use the water is granted to families, at the cost of about ten dollars per year.

About the year 1803, Col. Jeremiah Olney dug a fountain in the northeasterly part of the town on his own land, for the purpose of supplying the inhabitants on the east side of the river, with water. Logs were laid to the west end of Olney street, but he met with little encouragement, the inhabitants preferring to dig and own wells, as the land in that vicinity yields a great supply of good water at no very great depth.

A larger quantity of flour was brought to market in Providence, from the surrounding country, in 1774, than in any preceding year. It was in fact so great, as to form the subject of a newspaper paragraph. Mr. Carter, the editor of the Providence Gazette, a man not given to speculation, remarked, that there appeared a probability that flour would, in



time, become "a very considerable article of exportation." That time has not yet arrived, and probably never will, the industry of the people being turned to other objects.

The winter of 1779-80, was one of extreme severity. It continues to be referred to, up to the present day, as "the cold winter." At the time, it was said to be more severe than any that had preceded it for many years. The harbor of Providence was closed by ice in November, and continued so for nearly two months. The ice extended from Newport harbor to "the Dumplings." The island of Rhode-Island lost its insular character. Beaten paths were made over the ice from Newport to Wickford, East Greenwich and Providence. Loaded teams passed repeatedly across Narragansett Bay. The ground was covered with snow during the whole time, but not so deep as to obstruct the communication between different towns. The intensity of the cold, and its long continuance, caused great distress among the poor.

"The dark day," in May 1780, is often referred to by those who remember it. For several days previous to the 19th of that month, the atmosphere appeared to be charged with a dry, smoky vapor, so that the sun could be viewed with the naked eye. At 10 o'clock, on the 19th, the darkness had increased to such a degree, as to impede the regular transaction of business. Between half past twelve and one, it arrived at its height. Ordinary business was wholly suspended. That which was necessary to be done, was done by candle-light, though at noon-day.



Fowls sought their roosts, cattle retired, as at night, and men stood appalled at the dread appearances. The busy hum of life was stilled, and all nature seemed to wait in dismay for further demonstrations of her approaching dissolution. About one o'clock, the wind, which had been at southeast, changed to the southwest, the darkness began gradually to diminish, and at two o'clock, man and beast and fowl, were in the enjoyment of an apparent cloudy morning. A very little rain fell in the morning, while the wind was at southeast. During the whole time, the air had a sooty, smoky smell, which was also communicated to the rain water which was saved. This circumstance remembered, led afterward to the conclusion, that the strange appearances were caused by vast fires, known then to be raging in the forests in some parts of the country. The darkness was not peculiar to Providence. It extended over the greater part of New-England, some parts of the middle and southern states, and even to the Canadas.

Soon after the peace of 1783, the inhabitants of the state of Rhode-Island turned their attention to manufactures. The first company in the state, for the manufacture of cotton, was formed in Providence, in 1787. Their object was to make homespun cloth, by hand. At first, they built a jenny, of twenty-eight spindles, and after that, a spinning frame, having eight heads of four spindles each. They obtained the models of these machines from Massachusetts. They had also a carding machine. The jenny was first operated in one of the chambers of the market-house. In the following year, two Scotch-



men came to Providence, who knew how to use the fly-shuttle. A loom was constructed for one of them, and set up in the same place. The spinning-frame was afterwards removed to North Providence, to be worked by water, but it was found quite too imperfect for use. Samuel Slater, the acknowledged father of American cotton manufactures, arrived, at the same place, in January 1790. Before the end of the year, he had started three cards, one drawing frame, and seventy-two spindles, by water. From this small beginning, have arisen the cotton manufactures in this country. The first cotton thread spun by machinery, in Rhode-Island, was spun in the chambers of the market-house, in Providence. The first cotton thread spun by water, in the United States, was spun in North Providence.

About 1738, John Fullem worked a stocking loom in Providence, and in March 1790, a calendering machine was put in operation in the same place, moved by horse-power. In 1794, Messrs. Schaub, Tissot and Dubosque, were engaged in printing calicoes. In 1797, Peter Schaub and Robert Newell were engaged in the same business. They used cotton cloth imported from the East Indies, and wooden blocks to impart the desired figures and colors. Previous to this, by several years, calico printing in the same manner, was carried on at East Greenwich. This, it is supposed, was the first printing done in America. The Rhode-Island Historical Society have, in their cabinet at Providence, some of the calico first printed, and some of the blocks used. In August 1765, a large and complete paper mill



was first finished and put in operation near Providence, probably at Olneyville. This is the earliest of which I have obtained any information.

From the peace of 1783, down to the present time, (1842) there has been a gradual increase of attention to manufactures, and a gradual introduction of new manufactures. All the water power in Providence, is fully occupied, and besides this, there were in operation, in April 1842, thirty-four steam engines, in the whole exceeding nine hundred and twenty-five horse power. The latter were employed in grinding grain, sawing and polishing marble, printing cloths, bleaching, calendering and dyeing, sawing and planing lumber, for driving a pump in a distillery, and bellows in furnaces and foundries, in engraving cylinders for printing goods, and in manufacturing machinery, India rubber shoes, small wares, furniture, screws, reeds, power-loom pickers, carriages, and cotton and woollen goods.

In 1789, the mechanics and manufacturers of Providence formed themselves into an association for mutual aid, and obtained a charter of incorporation from the state.

This institution has been of the greatest advantage to its members and to the community. By annual assessment, they have become possessed of a handsome fund, devoted to charitable purposes, and are owners of a large and commodious hall on Market square. Some years since, they established a library, which, in 1842, contained nearly 2,000 volumes. Individually and collectively, the mechanics



and manufacturers of Providence have always willingly lent a ready hand for every good work.

Commerce was a favorite pursuit with the citizens of Providence, at an early period of its history.—What was the amount of duties on merchandise received before 1790, cannot be now ascertained.—The following is a statement of the amount of duties on merchandise which accrued in the district of Providence from the year 1790 to the year 1831, every dollar of which was paid.

1790	\$23,647	1811	\$216,975
1791	82,268	1812	184,624
1792	63,387	1813	146,249
1793	125,511	1814	85,016
1794	113,326	1815	100,390
1795	279,938	1816	269,660
1796	223,259	1817	210,359
1797	251,558	1818	210,163
1798	135,726	1819	404,850
1799	194,850	1820	118,439
1800	283,366	1821	99,626
1801	294,906	1822	485,067
1802	269,941	1823	250,717
1803	368,552	1824	247,510
1804	422,413	1825	103,350
1805	341,597	1826	304,492
1806	375,820	1827	203,620
1807	284,980	1828	195,172
1808	173,637	1829	132,738
1809	131,578	1830	100,585
1810	338,173	1831	284,094

Since 1831, there has been a great falling off in the amount of duties in this district. This was probably owing, partly, to the fact that enterprise and capital have since then been seeking more lucrative employment in manufactures, and partly, to the great growth and increased commercial importance of New-York and Boston. As those cities increase, the



foreign commerce of intervening and neighboring ports must decrease, and the coasting trade engross their attention.

At the August town-meeting, 1795, an attempt was made to diminish the danger of destructive fires, from the practice of smoking in the public streets. Since then the attempts by legislation have been multiplied, but public feeling has shown itself in this matter, stronger than positive law. The town act of 1795, had a peculiar exception attached to it, to preserve which it is here inserted.

“Whereas great danger of fire in this town arises from a very improper practice of smoking pipes and segars in the public streets, it is therefore recommended, by the freemen of the town, in town-meeting assembled, that the citizens wholly refrain from that practice; nevertheless, it is not understood by these recommendations, to prevent any among us, the young men or others, who may be under the necessity on account of any grievous malady from using the same by way of medicine.”

If only those smoke in the streets now, who are laboring under “grievous maladies,” we should have a very unfavorable opinion of the salubrity of the climate of Providence. At any rate, it would seem that some “young men and others” are very solicitous of recovering their health by their constant use of this medicine.

Within a few years past, much has been done by individuals toward beautifying the streets of Providence by planting ornamental trees on their borders. Since the labors of the side walk commissioners made the rough places smooth in the side walks, and permanently fixed the level and grade of the streets, there has been an increased attention to



this matter, and citizens and strangers are beginning to feel and appreciate the value of such trees. A like spirit pervaded the citizens in 1798. Just before that time, the Lombardy poplar was introduced here.— The tall and graceful appearance of the young trees with their bright glossy leaves, in connexion with their foreign origin, gained them many ardent friends and admirers. Nurseries of young plants were assiduously cultivated by individuals for sale. The town embarked in the speculation and ordered a nursery to be set out on the Hospital land. The mania raged some years, but not to an equal degree with the *morus multicaulis* mania of later times, nor with such ruinous effects on individuals. But it was soon ascertained that the Lombardy poplar would not bear the rigor of our climate, that its bright glossy foliage had a very disagreeable smell, and furnished food for a very loathsome and poisonous worm, that its form was so graceful that it afforded no shade, and that its wood yielded neither fuel nor timber. Its foreign origin could not support it, under all these disadvantages, and it was generally voted to agree with an old minister in an adjoining state, who declared that he had rather have two pear trees than one poplar. But a few remain to the present day.

In 1803, Daniel Anthony, a surveyor of great accuracy and skill, made the first map of Providence. It was drawn on a scale of fifty rods to the inch, and engraved by William Hamlin. Mr. Anthony published a second map, in 1824, on a large sheet. A glance at these two maps will do much toward



convincing any one of the rapid increase of Providence between those two dates.

In 1835, Benoni Lockwood and Samuel B. Cushing, published a map embracing Providence and North Providence. This was on a smaller scale than Mr. Anthony's, but more useful, because embracing the two towns, and other particulars not contained in the former.

At the June session of the General Assembly, 1799, John Smith, one of the Representatives of Providence, proposed in the lower House, the calling of a convention, for the formation of a state constitution, to consist of one delegate for every one thousand inhabitants. The motion was carried in that house, forty-four voting in the affirmative. It was probably lost in the Senate, as it does not appear in the schedules of the proceedings of the General Assembly.

In 1830, James Hammond resigned the office of Town Sergeant, which he had held, by annual election, twenty-one successive years. He had literally grown old in the service of the public. To discharge the duties of any office well, the incumbent must feel honored by the office. If he feel that he honors the office, the public service will suffer, by his official conduct. Though the office of Town Sergeant is not generally considered a high office, Deacon Hammond, as he was familiarly called, felt himself honored by it. This appeared in his every action. By virtue of this office, he officiated as crier to the courts in the county of Providence. On these occasions, he seemed conscious of the



dignity of the office he held. His look, his manner, his tone, every movement of the whole man, showed that while he admitted the office of presiding judge to be superior to that of Town Sergeant of the town of Providence, he doubted if any other was its equal. This did not appear in haughty, overbearing, arrogant conduct, on his part; that could never proceed from his humble heart. The man would acknowledge his inferiority to all around him. The sergeant claimed their deference and respect. His enunciation, clear, loud and distinct, was well suited to the vocation of crier. The formal prayer, at the end of the usual proclamations, which in other hands were as words of course, signifying nothing, accompanied as they always were with the uplifted hand and eye of Deacon Hammond, seemed indeed a prayer. Who that ever heard him read aloud the town-clerk's warrant for calling a town meeting, can forget his manner. He then moved, and looked, and spoke, as though the freemen of the town could not assemble in town-meeting without his aid. Old age and infirmities forced him to resign. And though the town gave him a vote of thanks for his services, and testified their gratitude in the weightier way of a gratuity, the man could not long survive the sargeant. He died on the 18th day of February 1831, in the 81st year of his age, leaving behind few that could equal, and none who would exceed him, as an honest, upright man. Had he lived and been blessed with strength to warn town meetings, the old way of warning them, by beat of drum and proclamation, would not



have been dispensed with, and perhaps the Town form of government would not have been overturned.

None of the first built dwelling houses are now in existence. A part of the "Manufacturers' Hotel," on Market square, is believed to be as old as any building now standing. The part alluded to, is near the south east corner of the present building. The house which was removed in the summer of 1842, from the corner of north Main and Church street, is also a very old building. The house formerly occupied by Gabriel Bernon, a French Huguenot, and in which tradition states that the common prayer book of the church of England was first used in public worship, now stands between North Main and Canal streets, in the rear of No. 49 North Main street. It formerly stood on North Main street.—The style of the oldest houses now standing, does not indicate that the owners abounded in wealth, or that the architects of those times possessed a superabundance of talent or taste. Comfort and convenience, were much more regarded than mere appearance. Utility was seldom sacrificed to looks. The oldest public building is "the old Town House," a venerable relic of this class of structures, proving as far as one item can prove a general proposition that the same considerations governed the inhabitants in the erection of their public and private buildings. The buildings of the next class, both public and private, show more wealth and taste. The reign of taste was soon followed again by that of utility and convenience, and it is not until a comparatively few years past, that utility, convenience, and taste, have



been united. Even within that time some attempts have been made to excel the works of the old Grecian and Roman architects, by the erection of buildings unique and singular. These attempts have been partially successful, and splendid monuments of monstrosity have been the result. Reference has been made in a previous chapter to several of the meeting-houses as fine specimens of architecture.— All that are so, were not then named, and the Arcade deserves also to be named in this connection. This was erected in 1827 and 1828. It is built of granite, fronting on two streets, Westminster on the north, and Weybosset on the south. It is seventy-four feet on each street and two hundred and sixteen feet in length. It forms a transept or cross of one hundred and ninety-four feet by forty-two. The two fronts are ornamented with recess porticos fifteen feet deep; each of which is composed of six Ionic columns, three feet in diameter, and two square antes, and is crowned with an entablature and cornice, forming a pediment. The whole height of the front collonade is forty feet from the base to the pediment. The roof over the entrance-hall, is covered with glass thirty-two feet in width and one hundred and eighty-eight feet in length; the rest of the roof is covered with tin. The entrance to each portico is by a flight of four steps, running, with the corner butments, the entire length of the colonade. The entrance hall runs from street to street and is thirteen feet wide. The building is three stories high, having twenty six stores in each story. Two flights of steps under each portico lead to the



stores in the second and third story. The corridors, forming the floors of these stories, are protected by a strong cast-iron balustrade, running entirely round the interior of the building. The whole cost of the building was estimated at \$145,000. It belongs, the east half to Cyrus Butler, and the west half to the Arcade corporation. The architect was Russell Warren. The investment has not been so profitable as the proprietors might have wished. To eke out the profits, they are entitled to the proud reflection, that they have erected the most beautiful building in Providence, and one that exceeds all others in the United States devoted to the same objects.

The public debt of Providence in 1831, amounted to \$108,814,97. In 1842 is was \$222,331,17.—Many great and permanent improvements have been made since the adoption of the city charter, in which the next generation will participate. This view of the matter has induced the city government to charge that generation also with a part of the expenses.

Until within a few years, no regular bill of mortality has been kept in Providence. By reference to them, since kept, it appears that the deaths in 1840, were 552, in 1841, 677, and in 1842, 702.—The population by the census of 1840, was 23,172.



## APPENDIX.

### ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY, FROM ADOPTION OF CITY CHARTER TO 1843.

I had intended to close the ecclesiastical history at the adoption of the city charter in 1832. It was found impossible, from the materials in my possession, to give the true religious statistics of the town at that time. This induced me to bring down the sketches given in Chap. II. to 1842, and to add sketches of such societies as has been formed since the adoption of the city charter.

**THE POWER STREET METHODIST CHURCH**, was constituted in 1833, and consisted of about fifty persons, who were dismissed from the Chestnut Street Church for the purpose of forming a new church. In 1842, their numbers exceeded three hundred and fifty. Their pastors have been Charles K. True, David Patten, jr. Hiram H. White, Asa W. Swinerton, Abel Stevens, Daniel Fillmore, Charles McReding. The present incumbent is Ephraim Stickney. Their meeting house is of brick, seventy-five by fifty feet. It is at the corner of South Main and Power streets, was dedicated January 1, 1834, and cost about \$15,000 which was raised by sale of pews. The church is attached to the Methodist Episcopal church in the United States.

**THE HIGH STREET CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**, consisted at first of forty members. Their present number (1842) is 221. It was organised December 18, 1834. They erected their present meeting-house in the same year. It is of wood, eighty feet by fifty, with a cupola steeple.—The cost of its erection was defrayed by lease of the pews for five hundred years, subject to an annual rent not exceeding eight per cent on their valuation. The house belongs to the High street Congregational society, incorporated in 1833. William B. Lewis, Nathaniel S. Folsom, and Leonard S. Parker, have successively been pastors of this church and society.—Mr. Parker is their present pastor.

**NEW JERUSALEM CHURCH.** A small society of this denomination has been gathered in Providence, and now holds its meetings for worship, in Union Hall, near the Universalist meeting-house. It is not known that there were any receivers of the doctrines of this church here, prior to the year 1824. Some volumes of the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg had, at an earlier period, been placed by Mr. Artemas Stebbins, of Swanzey,



in a circulating library, but few read them, and none are known to have believed what they teach.

In the year 1824, Waldo Ames, and George B. Holmes, came to reside in this place. Mr. Ames was a believer in the doctrines of the New Jerusalem. He went to England in 1826, and procured the writings of Swedenborg, and others, written in illustration and defence of these doctrines. Mr. Holmes was associated in business with Mr. Ames, and he and Mrs. Holmes, became receivers of these doctrines.

In 1834, James Scott, of North-Providence, and Anson Potter, of Cranston, became interested in the writings of Swedenborg. The former had been educated among the Quakers, and was deeply imbued with their principles. He is the son of the late Job Scott, a distinguished teacher of Quakerism. Mr. Potter had lived a professed Deist, but previously to his acquaintance with the doctrines of the New Jerusalem, had professed a belief in Christianity, and had received an idea, that there was a something of Divinity in the Lord Jesus Christ. Both of these gentlemen soon became convinced, that the New Jerusalem is indeed, a New Church, which the Lord is, at this day, establishing on earth.

In 1835, John F. Street, a member of the New Jerusalem church, in Manchester, England, came to reside in Seekonk, and made known the doctrines of the New Church to some persons at Pawtucket. He associated himself with the receivers already named, and they then began to hold meetings at each others' houses, on the Sabbath. These were social meetings, at which they read the word, the writings of Swedenborg, and sermons from the New Jerusalem Magazine, and from manuscripts, supplied by Samuel Worcester, of Bridgewater, Mass. Mr. Ames had already become a member of the New Church in Bridgewater, his native town. Mr. Scott and Mr. Potter went thither in about 1835, and received baptism, and were soon after joined to that church.

Public worship was now established. Sermons were furnished by Mr. Worcester, and Mr. Scott was appointed the reader, and Mr. Ames filled the same office, in the absence of Mr. Scott. This little society was established as a branch of the Bridgewater society, that it might be under the same pastoral care. This connexion was dissolved about the year 1840, and this society was organized as a distinct church, according to the usages and forms of the body of Christians to which it is attached. Still to the present time their number is so small that they have had no settled pastor over them, although their meetings are regularly kept up.

The first public meeting for worship was held April 19, 1835, and it is believed, to be the first ever held in this city for the worship of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the only GOD.

During this year, John Prentice embraced the doctrines of the New Jerusalem, and with his children, received baptism. He had been a preacher of the Congregational order, but was never settled as a pastor. He joined the New Church in Bridgewater, January 3, 1836. In the same year, Mrs.



George B. Holmes, Mrs. James Scott and Simon Henry Greene were also received into the same church. At the first public meeting of this society, twenty-five persons, including children, were present. The average number at this time may be about fifty. The number of church members now residing within this city is about twenty. Besides these, several adults and children have received introduction by baptism into the New Church.

The doctrines professed by this church, are called the Heavenly Doctrines of the New Jerusalem. They are not formed by the several societies which adopt them, but are taken from the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. All the societies of the New Jerusalem Church in this country and in others, embrace all the doctrines which are taught in those writings. An abstract of their articles of faith is contained in their Book of Worship. These are sanctioned by the New Church Conference in England, and the General Convention of the New Church in the United States. The reader is referred to their Book of Worship for particulars.

It is necessary to remark, in order to guard against mistakes, that the New Church do not regard the writings of Swedenborg, as containing any truth, except what is derived from the sacred scriptures. They believe, what he declares, that his spiritual sight was opened by the Lord, so that he saw spiritual beings and spiritual things, as spirits do, and that he was thus made acquainted with the same senses or meanings of the sacred scriptures, which are known and received in the heavens. The truths of the word revealed to him, while in this open intercourse with both good and evil spirits, are what are contained in his writings. He was thus enlightened by the Lord, that he might teach to the world, the true doctrines of the word, as they are known in heaven, in order that a church might be formed on earth, in agreement and conjunction with the church above. Swedenborg is therefore considered as an expositor enlightened and commissioned by the Lord, to make known the true doctrines of the word, and many arcana of heavenly wisdom concerning the spiritual world. But his writings have no claim to a comparison with the word; for the word, or sacred scriptures, is divine truth, and the writings of Swedenborg contain only common measures of wisdom which angels possess, and which men may receive. They are not the word, but are given to teach men the true meaning of the word.

The church which is to be formed by believing these doctrines, and living according to them, is called in the Revelation, the New Jerusalem, and because its doctrines are revealed from heaven, they are called the Heavenly doctrines of the New Jerusalem. In the society of which we are speaking, no prayer is used except the Lord's prayer; and nothing but the literal words of scripture is used in chanting or singing. Their public worship consists of chanting or singing portions of the word, the Lord's prayer, and reading from the word, and a sermon.



No full system of ecclesiastical government has yet been adopted in the New Church. The general laws of order are contained in the writings of Swedenborg; and different societies adopt different rules for their organization and government. In the United States, the ministers of the New Church derive their offices from the Convention, and are subject to the authority of that body. Churches are instituted, by ministers duly authorised by the Convention. These churches are understood to have the right and duty of choosing their pastors, but not of settling them without an act of the Convention, nor without their being ordained by ministers appointed by the Convention. From what has been already stated, it will appear, that the society of the New Church in Providence, was at first so much connected with that of Bridgewater, as not to possess the full organization and order of a church of the New Jerusalem. Considering that the doctrines of the New Jerusalem are essentially opposed to those in which all men at this day have been educated, and that they require a life opposed to all that is selfish and worldly, it is obvious, few will receive them, and that even that few, will be slow in their reception. The little flock here collected believe, that a true reception of these doctrines, also requires a far greater degree of rational knowledge of spiritual truths, than has been possessed for many ages. This knowledge may however, be obtained by those whom the world regard as the most simple, provided they deny themselves, take up their cross and follow the Lord. It is not regarded as desirable, but even as dangerous, to persuade men to assent to these doctrines, faster than they can truly forsake all that they have; and for this reason, the common modes of proselyting are not adopted. The doctrines are publicly taught, the books containing them are exposed for sale, and are freely loaned, and private instruction is gladly given to those who seek to know the truth, that they may do it. And though the progress of this church is slow, its members see, that old things are passing away, and they know, that all things will become new.

The greater part of the foregoing sketch of this church was kindly communicated to the author by James Scott. He is mistaken in believing that "the first public meeting for worship was holden April 19, 1835;" the author well recollects of attending a public meeting at "the old town house" more than twenty years since. This society propose erecting a house for public worship in the course of the present year.

**SAINT STEPHEN'S CHURCH.** Previous to 1833, a number of Episcopalians opened a Sunday school in the southerly part of the town. Meeting with unexpected success, in that year they purchased a building erected for an infant school room, removed it to Thayer street, and fitted it up for a place of public worship. At Easter 1839, they invited Francis Vinton to be their rector. The following year they erected their present house at the corner of Benefit and Transit streets. It is a rough stone structure, covered with cement, containing eighty-two pews on the ground



floor, the whole cost of which, with the organ, was about \$13,000. Mr. Vinton was temporarily succeeded in the rectorship by John H. Rouse. George Leeds succeeded Mr. Rouse. The present rector is Henry Waterman, and the number of communicants, upwards of seventy. The parish was incorporated in October 1839.

THE WEST BAPTIST CHURCH, was first recognised as a distinct church in October 1840. The members who composed it at first, were dismissed at their request, from the other Baptist churches in the city, for the purpose of uniting in a new church of the same faith and order which should hold forth a clearer and more decided testimony against slavery in all its forms. They first met for worship in a private house on Pine street, but soon hired the Green street school house, at the corner of Washington and Green streets, in which their meetings are still holden. Archibald Kenyon is their pastor. The number of communicants is one hundred and eight.

THE WESLEYAN METHODIST SOCIETY, was formed in 1841 by a number of persons who had been members of the Chestnut street Methodist Episcopal Society. Their first place of meeting was at a school house on Pond Street. They were incorporated in January 1842, and in the same year they erected a house for public worship on Fountain street. It is a plain wooden structure, sixty-five feet by forty-six, and cost \$6,000. On the 25th of December 1842, this society, by a formal vote, dissolved all connexion with the Methodist Episcopal Church, and became the First Wesleyan Society formed in New-England. The WESLEYAN CONNEXION has since extended to various parts of the country. The alleged reasons for their withdrawal were, the friendly relation the Methodist Episcopal Church sustained to slavery, and its ecclesiastical economy.

Jotham Horton was their first pastor. His connexion with this church ceased in January 1843, at his own request. He was succeeded by Lucius C. Matlack. The church members are one hundred in number.

SAINT PATRICK'S CHURCH. The increase of the Catholic population in Providence and vicinity, had, in the year 1841, become so great, as to render their church too small for their accommodation. To remedy this, a meeting, composed chiefly of persons residing in the north part of the city, was holden on the 15th day of March, in Washington Hall. At a subsequent meeting holden in Franklin Hall, in April, they organized their society and adopted measures for the speedy erection of a church, on a lot which they had purchased, situate on Smith's Hill so called, and fronting on State street. The location was well selected, being one of the most sightly and pleasant in the north part of the city. The corner stone of the church was laid, with religious ceremonies, on the 13th of June following. While their house was in progress of construction, they held meetings for public worship in Franklin Hall and Masonic Hall, under the ministration of William Fennelly, pastor of the Catholic church



at North Providence. The house being in a condition to be occupied for divine service, the congregation assembled therein, for the first time, on the 25th of December of the same year. Dennis Ryan officiated on this occasion. The church being completed was solemnly consecrated to the service of Almighty God, under the name and invocation of Saint Patrick, apostle of the Irish nation, on the 3d day of July 1842, by Benedict Fenwick, Catholic Bishop of New-England, assisted by several Catholic clergymen of the city and neighboring places. William Wiley was the first pastor of this society. He commenced his spiritual charge, January 16th 1842 and has retained it to the present time (January 1843.) The church is a neat, substantial building, of the castellated Gothic order of architecture, constructed of slate stone and covered with cement. It is seventy-five feet in length, exclusive of the tower, by fifty-five in breadth. It is capable of seating about eight hundred persons, with no other gallery than the one in front, which is mostly taken up by the choir and organ. It has an organ of superior tone, and a fine bell weighing two thousand pounds; the latter being mostly the gift of a liberal protestant gentleman of the city. The church, including the furniture and land, cost about \$17,000, for the payment of which reliance is placed, mainly, on funds derived or to be derived, from the contributions of the congregation and their fellow catholics in the city and vicinity, and from the income of pews in the church. The congregation, consisting of between eight and nine hundred adults, have already generously contributed for this purpose, but being, as the catholics here generally are, poor and dependent on their daily labor for subsistence, it will be readily and truly conjectured, that the building is still encumbered with a large debt. The society, from the want of a basement under the church, have as yet, no school provided; but the children are assembled every Lord's Day, one hour before each of the services, for catechetical and other religious instruction given by the pastor and subordinate teachers. The number of children in attendance, varies from one hundred to one hundred and fifty. The members of this society, as well as the catholic population of the city and vicinity, are principally natives of Ireland (with the exception of some English and a few Americans) who have emigrated to this free country, with a view of enjoying that liberty of conscience and those civil rights and privileges which are denied to them in the oppressed and persecuted land of their fathers.

**SEAMEN'S BETHEL.** In August 1841, a number of persons who felt an interest in the seamen visiting this port, united themselves into a society with the design of erecting a meeting-house for their accommodation.— Their number did not exceed forty, and though not abounding in riches, they immediately commenced the erection of a house forty-five by seventy feet. It is not yet completed, although public worship has been holden in it, since the autumn of 1841. The society have expended about \$5,500, on it and it will require about \$1,500 to complete it. Benjamin



Taylor, preaches in this church. A collection is taken up at every meeting for the support of public worship. The seats are free, those in the body of the house being exclusively appropriated to seamen. Such an institution would seem entitled to a full share of christian munificence.

THE SECOND UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY, meet for worship in the "Old Town House." It was formed in 1841, by a secession of some of the members of the First Society, made for want of sufficient accommodations in their meeting house. They are under the pastoral care of James Gallagher. J. N. Parker and William Jackson preceded him in office.

THE SECOND FREWILL BAPTIST CHURCH was organized in September 1835, under John W. Lewis as their pastor. Their number then was ten. They met for worship in the African Union meeting and school house until November 1840. They then hired a hall on Middle street and since, in 1841, they erected a house for public worship on Pond street. It is a small wooden building, thirty feet by forty. The society was incorporated in January 1842. After Mr. Lewis, Luke Waldron their present pastor was called to preside over this church and society. The church now consists of upwards of sixty members.

THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH was gathered in 1837. It belongs to the Wesleyan Methodist Episcopal church. The annual conference of this body of professing christians meets at New-York.—The pastors of this church and society are appointed by the conference. They have been Jehial C. Beman, William Serrington, and Nathan Blunt. Levin Smith is their present pastor. The church in 1840 consisted of fifty members, now (1842) there are nearly one hundred members. They at first hired a small building in which to hold their meetings.—They now own a small house and lot on Back street. The society was incorporated in January 1838.

THE SECOND AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, consisting of fifteen persons, first met as a distinct body in September 1838. The same year they built their meeting house, on Meeting street, east of Prospect street. It is thirty-five feet by twenty-five. The church is attached to the African Methodist Episcopal church, in the United States, which was incorporated in Pennsylvania in 1816. Their preachers are appointed by the annual conference of that church. The first was N. C. W. Cannon. He was succeeded by Jabez P. Campbell. The number of church members exceeds eighty. The society was incorporated in 1839.

CHRIST CHURCH. The society incorporated, in March 1842, under this name, first met together for worship, in 1839, in a school house on Washington street. They have since erected a church on Union street. It is a small, neat, wooden building, thirty-eight by fifty-two feet. S. G. Degrasse officiated as minister for this society during the summer and autumn of 1840. Alexander Crummell, lay-reader, succeeded him. This church is part of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, and conforms to it, in rites and usages, government and doctrines.



## PERIODICALS COMMENCED SINCE 1832.

From the organization of the city government in 1832, up to December 1842, several periodicals, political, sectarian and literary, have been commenced. I have endeavored to annex a brief sketch of each of them.

"The Evening Star," was the first daily penny paper in the state, and the third, it is believed, in the country. It was published in 1834, by Charles Haswell. After printing a few numbers, he relinquished the undertaking to Nathan Hall and Cornelius S. Jones. They continued the paper under the title of "The Daily News," from April 1834, to December following. After this it was published by Jones & Haswell until August 1836.

"The Daily City Gazette" commenced Feb. 2, 1833, and was published about nine months, after which "the City Gazette" was published as a weekly paper for a short time. Sylvester S. Southworth and Stephen G. Holroyd, were the publishers.

"The Commercial Advertiser," a daily evening paper, commenced about the first of June 1834, and continued about three months. "The New-England Family Visitor," was a weekly paper made up from the Advertiser, and published during the same time. Knowles & Burroughs were the publishers.

Samuel S. Wilson commenced the publication of the first penny paper in the state, January 1, 1835, under the title of "The Penny Post." After six months the title was changed to "The Weekly Visitor," under which title, Mr. Wilson published it for about three months, when he transferred it to Cyril A. Carpenter, who discontinued it after about one month.

"The Light" was assumed as the name for a paper ostensibly engaged in the cause of moral reform, published simultaneously in New-York and Providence, by Joseph A. Whitmarsh, in 1835. It gave rise, in Providence, to another paper, entitled "More Light," edited by Jacob Frieze. They both were short lived.

"The Morning Courier" commenced in June 1836. It was published both daily and semi-weekly by William G. Larned. This paper assumed a neutral ground in politics, and, of course, was not patronised extensively. In January 1840, the establishment was transferred to "The Journal."

"The Gaspee Torch Light" was published at the "Journal Office," for about three months preceding the presidential election in 1840, edited by William R. Watson. This gave rise to "The Extinguisher," which was published during the same time, at "The Herald" office, edited by Jacob Frieze. The first advocated and the other opposed the election of General Harrison to the presidency.

"The Evening Chronicle" is a daily penny paper, edited and published by Joseph M. Church. The first number issued on the evening of the 30th day of March 1842. "The Narraganset Chief," is a weekly paper made up from the Chronicle, and published on Saturdays.

"The Plain Speaker," is a paper published at Providence, though printed at North Providence. The character of this paper is well described



ed by its title. It is published occasionally, circulated gratuitously, and supported by voluntary donations. Christopher A. Greene is the editor.

During the year 1834, Silas Weston published and edited a semi-monthly paper under the title of "The Pupil's Monitor. The title describes the work.

"The Cradle of Liberty," was chiefly made up of selections from "The Liberator." It was published monthly for one year, (1839,) and devoted to the cause of anti-slavery.

In 1834, a few numbers of a paper entitled "The Constitutionalist" were published; the object of which was, to advocate the adoption of a written constitution for the state. It expired for want of support.

To further the same object and an extension of the right of suffrage, "The New Age," a weekly paper, commenced February 19, 1841. The first number was printed by Benjamin T. Albro. The publishers were "the Rhode-Island Suffrage Association." Subsequently, it was published by Millard (Samuel M.) & Brown (John A.) and at a later period by Millard, Low (Samuel) & Miller (William J.) On the 18th day of March, 1842, they commenced the publication of a daily paper, devoted, to the same objects, under the title of "The Daily Express." Both of these papers were discontinued during a part of the summer of 1842, but were revived in the autumn of the same year.

"The Suffrage Examiner," was the title of a single paper published in 1841 by the executive committee of the Rhode-Island Anti-Slavery society, to oppose the adoption of any constitution for the state which made any distinction in the political rights of the white and colored population.

The following papers have been devoted to the cause of temperance.

"The Rhode-Island Temperance Herald," commenced Oct. 13th, 1838, was continued one year. It was edited by an association of gentlemen, and published weekly, on Saturdays, at No. 15, Market Square. On the 30th of October 1839, it appeared in an enlarged form under the title of

"The Olive Leaf and Rhode-Island Temperance Herald." At first it was edited by Charles Jewett and Lorenzo D. Johnson, and afterwards by Abel Stevens. In May 1840 it was united to the "New-York Weekly Messenger," and published simultaneously in New-York, Providence and Boston, under the name of "The Olive Leaf and New-York Weekly Messenger." Mr. Johnson resumed the editorship after the union.

"The Cold Water Gazette" began March 21st 1840. It was edited by Wyllis Ames and published at No. 14½ Westminster street. The main object of this publication was to further the election of a temperance ticket of general officers for the state. Only a few numbers were ever published.

"The Samaritan" continues to be an unwavering champion of total abstinence from all that intoxicates. It commenced November 10th, 1841, and is published weekly. Samuel S. Ashley and Thomas Tew were joint editors at first. After some time, the establishment was transferred to Mr. Tew, and is now published semi-monthly.



"The Rhode-Island Temperance Advocate" was the title of a paper proposed to be published semi-monthly by Joseph A. Whitmarsh under the direction of the executive committee of the Providence young men's temperance society. The first number is dated in May 1833, and no other one ever was published.

"The Gospel Messenger, devoted to theoretical and practical religion and morality," commenced November 28, 1840. It was printed weekly on a demi sheet, and edited by Zephaniah Baker. In January 1842, it was enlarged, when S. P. Landers was associated with Mr. Baker in the editorship. In January 1843, A. A. Davis became sole proprietor and associated Hervy Bacon and D. B. Harris with himself in the editorship. It is published at Providence and Boston simultaneously, but printed at the office of B. F. Moore in Providence. It is devoted to the cause of Universalism, but its columns are open to free discussion of all the great moral principles of the age.

"John the Baptist," is the title of a work devoted to the interests of the Six Principle Baptists. John Tillinghast is the editor. It commenced in 1840. The first volume was published by Benjamin T. Albro. It is now printed in Pawtucket.

"The Christian Soldier" is a semi-monthly publication belonging to the Freewill Baptists. It was commenced February 18th 1842. J. Whittemore and T. H. Bacheller are the editors. Some of the first numbers were issued from the printing office of Hugh H. Brown. Afterwards it was printed in Pawtucket.

But one literary paper has been started since the adoption of the city charter. Notwithstanding the talents and abilities of the editor and the industry of the publishers it continued in existence only one year. It commenced in June 1832. It was called "The Literary Journal and Weekly Register of Science and the arts." It was a quarto of eight pages, published weekly. Albert G. Greene was the editor, and Knowles & Vose the publishers. After two months it was published by J. Knowles & Company.

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In the preceding pages, the author has aimed to be correct in his facts, and just in his conclusions. Yet with all his care and labor, he doubts not many errors may have escaped him. Two have been pointed out to him, which he takes pleasure in correcting. One relates to the Dexter Asylum. The architect of the building gave him the information to be found on pages 392 and 393. Since those pages were printed, the same gentleman informed him that it is not entirely correct. The chapel is forty-seven feet by forty. The basement under the east wing, on the south side of the corridor, is divided into an eating-room, a wash-room, and two cells. On the north side, is a fuel and furnace room, a work-room and a cellar. The basement of the west wing, on the south of the corridor, has also an eating-room and a store-room; on the north, is a fuel and furnace room, two cellars and a stair-case.

On page 262, it is stated that the French army spent the winter of 1782 in Providence. This information was derived from Dr. Stephen Randall, since deceased. In 1782, he had the agency of the land on which they encamped. A few days after that page was struck off, Dr. Randall called on the author, to correct his statements, having, in the meantime, referred to documents to enable him to do so. The first division of the army arrived November 10, 1782, and pitched their tents on Mathewson's Hill. The second division arrived soon after. They removed in a few days from Mathewson's Hill to the place named on page 262. Before December 7th, they marched for Boston, to embark for Europe.



# List of persons who have held certain offices in Providence.

## REPRESENTATIVES IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1664. *First Session.* Stephen Arnold,  
*July.*  
 Two sets returned.  
 Thomas Harris,  
 Thomas Olney,  
 Thomas Field,  
 Thomas Olney, jr.  
 John Throckmorton,  
 Anthony Everden,  
 Thomas Hopkins,  
 Shadrach Manton.
1667. *October.*  
 John Throckmorton,  
 Edward Inman,  
 Lawrence Wilkinson,  
 Resolved Waterman.
1668.  
 John Throckmorton,  
 Edward Inman,  
 Samuel Bennett,  
 Nathaniel Waterman.
- October.*  
 Henry Brown,  
 Anthony Everden,  
 Edward Smith,  
 Shadrach Manton.
1669. *May.*  
 John Sayles,  
 John Whipple, jr.  
 Andrew Harris,  
 Shadrach Manton.
- Oct.—Not known.*
1670. *May.*  
 John Throckmorton,  
 Thomas Harris,  
 Arthur Fenner,  
 Andrew Harris.
- June.*  
 Thomas Olney,  
 Thomas Field,  
 Stephen Arnold,  
 Thomas Roberts.
- June, 2d session.*  
 Thomas Arnold,  
 John Throckmorton,  
 John Sayles,  
 John Whipple, jr.
- Oct.—Two sessions.*  
 John Sayles,  
 Thomas Harris,  
 Shadrach Manton,  
 Thomas Borden.
1771. *May.*  
 Thomas Olney,  
 John Sayles,  
 Shadrach Manton,  
 Ephraim Carpenter.
- September.*  
 John Throckmorton,  
 Anthony Everden,  
 Thomas Arnold,  
 Henry Brown.
- October.*  
 Stephen Arnold,  
 John Sayles,  
 Thomas Harris,  
 Richard Arnold.
1772. *March 5.*  
 Stephen Arnold,  
 John Throckmorton,  
 Thomas Clemence,  
 Thomas Roberts.
1672. *March 15.*  
 Henry Brown,  
 Anthony Everden,  
 Henry Fowler,  
 John Smith, (miller)
- April 2.*  
 Stephen Arnold,  
 Thomas Olney, jr.  
 Ephraim Carpenter,  
 John Whipple.
- April 30.*  
 Arthur Fenner,  
 Thomas Arnold,  
 Edward Inman,  
 Thomas Hopkins.
- October.*  
 William Harris,  
 Samuel Reife,  
 Pardon Tillinghast,  
 Thomas Borden.
1673. *May.*  
 John Throckmorton,  
 William Harris,  
 Lawrence Wilkinson,  
 Anthony Everden.
- October.*  
 John Lapham,  
 William Ashton,  
 Thomas Harris,  
 Toleration Harris.
1674.  
 John Whipple,  
 John Sayles,
1664. *First Session.* Arthur Fenner,  
 Zachary Rhodes,  
 Thomas Harris, sen.  
 John Brown.  
*May.*  
 William Carpenter,  
 William Wickenden,  
 Arthur Fenner,  
 Stephen Arnold.  
*October.*  
 Gregory Dexter,  
 John Throckmorton,  
 William Carpenter,  
 Zachary Rhodes.
1665. *February.*  
 William Harris,  
 Thomas Arnold,  
 Thomas Hopkins,  
 Stephen Arnold.
- May.*  
 William Carpenter,  
 Zachary Rhodes,  
 James Ashton,  
 Henry Brown.
- October.*  
 Thomas Olney, sen.  
 John Throckmorton,  
 Thomas Hopkins,  
 Edward Smith.
1666. *March.*  
 Richard Scott,  
 Thomas Borden,  
 John Smith, (miller)  
 Thomas Clemence.
- May.*  
 John Throckmorton,  
 William Harris,  
 Thomas Harris,  
 Edward Inman.
- September.*  
 Same as May, except  
 John Whipple in place  
 of William Harris.
- October.*  
 Thomas Arnold,  
 William Wickenden,  
 Gregory Dexter,  
 Epenetus Olney.
1667. *May.*  
 Roger Williams,  
 Thomas Olney,  
 John Throckmorton,



- Stephen Arnold,  
Edward Inman  
*October.*  
Samuel Bennett,  
Samuel Winsor,  
William Hopkins,  
Leonard Smith.  
1675. *May.*  
Toleration Harris,  
Edward Smith,  
William Ashton,  
Valentine Whitman.  
*October.*  
William Carpenter,  
Stephen Arnold,  
John Throckmorton,  
William Ashton.  
1676. *March.*  
John Whipple,  
Edward Inman,  
Richard Arnold,  
John Field.  
*May.*  
William Carpenter,  
Stephen Arnold,  
Thomas Olney, jr.  
Edward Smith.  
*October.*  
John Sayles,  
Edward Inman,  
Andrew Harris,  
Epenetus Olney.  
1677. *May.*  
Thomas Olney, jr.  
William Hopkins,  
Stephen Arnold,  
John Whipple, jr.  
*October.*  
John Sayles,  
Edward Inman,  
Samuel Bennett,  
William Hawkins.  
1678. *May.*  
Edward Inman,  
Samuel Bennett,  
Thomas Arnold,  
William Hawkins.  
*October.*  
Arthur Fenner,  
John Sayles,  
Nathaniel Waterman,  
William Hawkins.  
1679. *May.*  
Joseph Jenckes,  
Arthur Fenner,  
William Carpenter,  
Richard Arnold.
- October.*  
Valentine Whitman,  
Thomas Harris, jr.  
(The others illegible.)  
1680. *March.*  
Thomas Olney, jr.  
Joseph Jenckes,  
William Hopkins,  
John Dexter.  
*May.*  
Richard Arnold,  
Thomas Harris, jr.  
Nathaniel Waterman,  
Edward Smith.  
*October.*  
John Thornton,  
Pardon Tillinghast,  
James Mathewson,  
Edward Smith.  
1681. *May.*  
John Whipple, jr.  
Richard Arnold,  
Nathaniel Waterman,  
Thomas Harris, jr.  
1682. *May.*  
Valentine Whitman,  
Nathaniel Waterman,  
William Hopkins,  
John Whipple, jr.  
1682. *May.*  
Thomas Harris, jr.  
Edward Smith,  
Thomas Arnold,  
John Whipple, jr.  
*September and October.*  
Thomas Olney,  
William Hopkins,  
Nathaniel Waterman,  
Edward Smith.  
1683. *March and May.*  
Thomas Field,  
Thomas Arnold,  
Thomas Fenner,  
Alexander Balcom.  
*August and October.*  
Thomas Olney,  
Nathaniel Waterman,  
Joseph Williams,  
Edward Smith.  
1684. *May.*  
Stephen Arnold,  
John Whipple, jr.  
Henry Brown,  
Epenetus Olney.  
*October.*  
John Whipple, jr.  
Joseph Williams,
- John Dexter,  
Thomas Arnold.  
1685. *May.*  
Stephen Arnold,  
Thomas Field,  
Valentine Whitman,  
Thomas Harris, jr.  
*October.*  
Thomas Harris,  
Thomas Olney,  
Nathaniel Waterman,  
Thomas Field.  
1686. *May.*  
Valentine Whitman,  
John Whipple, jr.  
Epenetus Olney,  
John Angell.  
*October.*  
Thomas Olney,  
William Hopkins,  
Eleazer Arnold,  
John Dexter.  
1687-88-89.  
None.  
1690. *May.*  
Stephen Arnold,  
Pardon Tillinghast,  
John Dexter,  
Gideon Crawford.  
*October.*  
Gideon Crawford,  
Thomas Olney,  
John Whipple,  
Nathaniel Waterman.  
1691. *March.*  
Thomas Harris,  
Samuel Whipple,  
Thomas Fenner,  
Joseph Jenckes.  
*October.*  
James Blackmore,  
Thomas Arnold,  
Benjamin Carpenter,  
Thomas Fenner.  
1692. *May.*  
Not known.  
*October.*  
Thomas Olney,  
Arthur Fenner,  
William Crawford,  
Thomas Field.  
1693. *May.*  
William Hopkins,  
Joseph Williams,  
Eleazer Whipple,  
Samuel Wilkinson.



- October.*  
Not known.
1694. *May.*  
Thomas Harris,  
John Dexter,  
Gideon Crawford,  
James Angell,  
*October.*  
Pardon Tillinghast,  
Gideon Crawford,  
John Sayles,  
Daniel Abbott.
1695. *May and October.*  
Thomas Field,  
Wm. Hopkins,  
Thomas Fenner,  
Jonathan Sprague.
1696. *May.*  
Thomas Olney,  
Richard Arnold,  
Jonathan Sprague,  
John Dexter.  
*October.*  
Richard Arnold,  
Joseph Williams,  
John Dexter,  
Thomas Olney.
1697. *January.*  
Pardon Tillinghast,  
John Dexter,  
Thomas Harris,  
Samuel Wilkinson.  
*May.*  
Nathaniel Waterman,  
William Hopkins,  
Gideon Crawford,  
Benjamin Carpenter.  
*October.*  
William Hopkins,  
Joseph Williams,  
Gideon Crawford,  
Thomas Fenner.
1698. *January.*  
Richard Arnold,  
John Dexter,  
Gideon Crawford,  
Jonathan Sprague.  
*May.*  
Joseph Williams,  
Richard Arnold,  
James Angell,  
Joseph Whipple.  
*October.*  
Joseph Jenckes,  
Samuel Wilkinson,  
James Angell,  
Joseph Whipple.
1699. *February.*  
Samuel Wilkinson,  
James Angell,  
Joseph Jenckes,  
Joseph Whipple.  
*May.*  
William Hopkins,  
Thomas Fenner,  
James Brown,  
Samuel Comstock.  
*October.*  
Arthur Fenner,  
Nathaniel Waterman,  
Benjamin Carpenter,  
Gideon Crawford.
1700. *February.*  
Pardon Tillinghast,  
John Dexter,  
Eleazer Arnold,  
Jonathan Sprague.  
*May.*  
Jonathan Sprague,  
John Wilkinson,  
Elisha Arnold,  
Peleg Rhodes.  
*October.*  
Arthur Fenner,  
Richard Arnold,  
John Dexter,  
Joseph Jenckes.
1701. *March.*  
John Dexter,  
Richard Arnold,  
Samuel Wilkinson,  
Joseph Jenckes.  
*May.*  
Gideon Crawford,  
William Randall,  
Eleazer Whipple,  
Eleazer Arnold.  
*October.*  
John Dexter,  
Richard Arnold,  
Gideon Crawford,  
Joseph Jenckes.
1702. *March.*  
John Dexter,  
Gideon Crawford,  
Joseph Whipple,  
Samuel Comstock.  
*May.*  
Nathaniel Waterman,  
Gideon Crawford,  
Joseph Whipple,  
Samuel Comstock.  
*September.*  
Jonathan Sprague,
- John Sheldon,  
Thomas Harris,  
James Brown.  
*October.*  
Richard Arnold,  
John Dexter,  
Jonathan Sprague,  
Joseph Jenckes.  
1703. *January and May.*  
John Dexter,  
Jonathan Sprague,  
Eleazer Arnold,  
Joseph Whipple.  
*October.*  
John Dexter,  
Joseph Jenckes,  
Gideon Crawford,  
William Hawkins.
1704. *January.*  
Jonathan Sprague,  
Samuel Wilkinson,  
Gideon Crawford,  
Nicholas Power.  
*May.*  
Joseph Whipple,  
Jonathan Knight,  
James Angell,  
Stephen Arnold.  
*October.*  
John Dexter,  
Joseph Jenckes,  
Thomas Fenner,  
Gideon Crawford.
1705. *May.*  
John Dexter,  
Joseph Jenckes,  
Gideon Crawford,  
Joseph Whipple.  
*June.*  
John Dexter,  
Richard Arnold,  
Thomas Fenner,  
Andrew Harris.  
*August.*  
Jonathan Sprague,  
Joseph Jenckes,  
Joseph Whipple,  
James Brown.  
*October.*  
John Dexter,  
Samuel Wilkinson,  
Joseph Jenckes,  
Wm. Hawkins.
1706. *March.*  
John Wilkinson,  
William Hawkins,  
Stephen Arnold,



Elisha Arnold.

*May.*

Thomas Harris,  
Thomas Field,  
Gideon Crawford,  
John Sayles,  
*July.*

Eleazer Arnold,  
Jonathan Sprague,  
Joseph Whipple,  
John Wilkinson.

*October.*

Joseph Jenckes,  
Samuel Wilkinson,  
Jonathan Sprague,  
Thomas Olney.

*1707. February.*

Jonathan Sprague,  
Joseph Jenckes,  
Samuel Wilkinson,  
Joseph Whipple.

*May.*

Joseph Jenckes,  
Jonathan Sprague,  
Samuel Comstock,  
Thomas Olney.

*1707. May.*

Eleazer Arnold,  
Thomas Olney jr.  
Thomas Harris,  
Andrew Harris.

*October.*

Richard Arnold,  
Samuel Wilkinson,  
Philip Tillinghast,  
Arthur Fenner.

*1708. February.*

Jonathan Sprague,  
Joseph Whipple,  
Thomas Harris,  
Nicholas Power.

*May.*

Jonathan Sprague,  
Joseph Jenckes,  
Philip Tillinghast,  
Samuel Comstock.

*October.*

Thomas Olney,  
Jonathan Sprague,  
Joseph Whipple,  
Philip Tillinghast.

*1709. May.*

Jonathan Sprague,  
Sylvanus Scott,  
Philip Tillinghast,  
James Brown.

*September and October.*

Jonathan Sprague,  
Philip Tillinghast,  
Nathaniel Jenckes,  
Richard Brown.

*1710. May.*

Jonathan Sprague,  
Joseph Whipple,  
Andrew Harris,  
William Hopkins.

*October.*

Nathaniel Jenckes,  
Philip Tillinghast,  
Arthur Fenner,  
Thomas Harris.

*1711. May.*

Peleg Rhodes,  
James Dexter,  
William Crawford,  
Jonathan Sprague.

*July and October.*

Joseph Whipple,  
James Brown,  
John Smith,  
Thomas Olney.

*November.*

Samuel Comstock,  
Eleazer Arnold,  
Thomas Arnold jr.  
William Wilkinson.

*1712. May.*

Richard Waterman,  
Philip Tillinghast,  
Richard Brown,  
Samuel Wilkinson.

*May.*

Jonathan Sprague,  
Joseph Whipple,  
William Hopkins,  
James Brown.

*1712. October.*

William Hopkins,  
Jonathan Sprague,  
William Smith,  
William Crawford.

*1713. May.*

Nathaniel Jenckes,  
Philip Tillinghast,  
William Crawford,  
Daniel Abbott.

*October.*

William Hopkins,  
Joseph Williams,  
Joseph Whipple,  
James Dexter.

*1714. May.*

William Hopkins,  
Joseph Whipple,  
William Harris,  
Jonathan Sprague.

*October.*

William Hopkins,  
William Smith,  
Jonathan Sprague,  
Joseph Mowry.

*1715. May.*

Andrew Harris,  
Resolved Waterman,  
Thomas Steere,  
Eleazer Arnold.

*October.*

William Hopkins,  
Philip Tillinghast,  
Eleazer Arnold,  
Andrew Harris.

*1716. May.*

John Arnold,  
John Burton,  
Edward Smith,  
Daniel Abbott.

*October.*

Joseph Whipple,  
Edward Smith,  
Samuel Wilkinson,  
William Smith.

*1717. May.*

Joseph Whipple,  
William Crawford,  
Edward Smith,  
Daniel Abbott.

*October.*

William Harris,  
James Dexter,  
Andrew Harris,  
Sylvanus Scott.

*1718. May.*

Jonathan Sprague, jr.  
Thomas Harris,  
Daniel Abbott,  
Joseph Brown.

*October.*

Richard Waterman,  
William Crawford,  
William Harris,  
John Jenckes.

*1719. May.*

William Crawford,  
Elisha Knowlton,  
William Harris,  
Richard Waterman.



*October.*

Valentine Whitman,  
Stephen Arnold,  
Jacob Clark,  
Hope Angell.

*1720. May.*

William Smith,  
Hope Angell,  
William Harris,  
Jonathan Sprague, jr.

*October.*

Arthur Fenner,  
William Smith,  
William Harris,  
Daniel Abbott.

*1721. May.*

William Smith,  
Daniel Abbott,  
Ebenezer Sprague,  
Jonathan Sprague, jr.

*October.*

William Smith,  
James Olney,  
Elisha Knowlton,  
Andrew Harris.

*1722. May.*

Joseph Whipple,  
Nicholas Power,  
Thomas Olney,  
William Turpin.

*October.*

Joseph Whipple,  
Philip Tillinghast,  
Nicholas Power,  
Thomas Olney,

*1723. May.*

Joseph Whipple,  
Philip Tillinghast,  
Nicholas Power,  
William Turpin.

*October.*

Samuel Wilkinson,  
Richard Brown,  
Thomas Arnold,  
Henry Harris.

*November.*

Richard Waterman,  
William Smith,  
Daniel Abbott,  
John Angell.

*1724. May.*

Richard Waterman,  
William Smith,  
Daniel Abbott,  
Jonathan Sprague.

*October.*

Richard Waterman,  
Elisha Knowlton,

William Smith,  
William Edmonds.

*1725. May.*

Richard Waterman,  
Joseph Mowry,  
Jonathan Sprague, jr.  
Thomas Olney.

*October.*

Richard Waterman,  
Jonathan Sprague, jr.  
Thomas Olney,  
Joseph Whipple.

*1726. May.*

Richard Waterman,  
Jonathan Sprague, jr.  
Elisha Knowlton,  
James Arnold.

*October.*

Richard Waterman,  
William Smith,  
Philip Tillinghast,  
Daniel Cooke.

*1727. May.*

Richard Waterman,  
William Smith,  
William Jenckes,  
Philip Tillinghast.

*October.*

Joseph Whipple,  
Philip Tillinghast,  
William Porter,  
Stephen Dexter.

*1728. May.*

Thomas Olney,  
William Smith,  
Elisha Knowlton,  
Daniel Abbott.

*October.*

William Smith,  
William Jenckes,  
Joseph Whipple,  
Ezekiel Warner.

*1729. May.*

William Smith,  
Elisha Knowlton,  
Ezekiel Warner,  
Daniel Abbott.

*October.*

Ezekiel Warner,  
William Jenckes,  
Joseph Mowry,  
William Turpin.

*1730. May.*

Ezekiel Warner,  
Daniel Abbott,  
Jonathan Sprague, jr.  
James Brown, jr.

*October.*

Nicholas Power,  
Thomas Olney,  
Richard Sayles,  
John Potter, jr.

*1731. May.*

John Potter, jr.  
Jabez Bowen,  
John Thornton,  
William Rhodes.

*October.*

Philip Tillinghast,  
John Potter, jr.  
John Angell,  
Richard Thornton.

*1732. May.*

Richard Waterman,  
John Potter, jr.  
John Thornton,  
Jabez Bowen.

*October.*

John Angell,  
Thomas Olney,  
Richard Waterman,  
James Congdon.

*1733. May.*

Richard Waterman,  
Jabez Bowen,  
Joseph Fenner,  
Richard Thornton.

*October.*

Ezekiel Warner,  
Daniel Abbott,  
Robert Gibbs,  
Richard Fenner.

*1734. May.*

Ezekiel Warner,  
Thomas Olney,  
Daniel Abbott,  
Richard Fenner.

*October.*

John Thornton,  
Robert Gibbs,  
William Hopkins,  
Jonathan Randall.

*1735. May.*

Jabez Bowen,  
Richard Fenner,  
William Rhodes,  
Jonathan Randall.

*October.*

Daniel Abbott,  
Charles Tillinghast,  
Richard Thornton,  
William Burton.

*1736. May.*

Jabez Bowen,  
Richard Fenner,



William Hopkins,  
Robert Knight.

*October.*

Daniel Abbott,  
William Hopkins,  
Richard Thornton,  
Zurriel Waterman.

*1737. May.*

John Potter,  
James Brown,  
William Rhodes,  
William Hopkins.

*October.*

Daniel Abbott,  
Jabez Bowen,  
Richard Fenner,  
Peter Burlingame.

*1738. May.*

Charles Tillinghast,  
John Potter,  
Jabez Bowen,  
Richard Thornton.

*October.*

William Jenks,  
John Thornton,  
William Hopkins,  
Charles Tillinghast.

*1739. May and July.*

Richard Fenner,  
Peter Burlingame,  
James Williams, jr.  
Robert Gibbs.

*October.*

John Potter,  
Jabez Bowen,  
Richard Thornton,  
Jonathan Randall.

*1740. May.*

Peter Burlingame,  
Richard Thornton,  
Jonathan Randall,  
William Hopkins.

*October.*

Daniel Abbott,  
Charles Tillinghast,  
John Thornton,  
George Brown.

*1741. May.*

John Potter,  
Jabez Bowen,  
Jonathan Randall,  
Robert Gibbs.

*October.*

John Hopkins,  
George Brown,  
Nathaniel Jenckes,  
Richard Thornton.

*1742. May.*

Daniel Abbott,  
William Burton, jr.  
Jabez Bowen,  
Jonathan Randall.

*October.*

Charles Tillinghast,  
Thomas Field,  
Stephen Hopkins,  
Henry Harris.

*1743. May.*

John Potter,  
Jabez Bowen,  
Jonathan Randall,  
Christopher Harris.

*October.*

Robert Gibbs,  
Edward Arnold,  
George Brown,  
Benjamin Potter.

*1744. May.*

Jabez Bowen,  
John Burton, jr.  
Stephen Hopkins,  
Joseph Borden.

*October.*

William Rhodes,  
George Brown,  
Henry Harris,  
John Potter, jr.

*1745. May.*

William Smith,  
George Brown,  
Joseph Borden,  
Ezekiel Warner.

*October.*

John Angell,  
Christopher Lippitt,  
Benjamin Potter,  
Joseph Olney.

*1746. May.*

George Brown,  
Joseph Sheldon,  
Stephen Hopkins,  
Henry Harris.

*October.*

George Brown,  
Stephen Hopkins,  
Benjamin Potter, jr.  
Jonathan Randall.

*1747. May.*

George Brown,  
Stephen Hopkins,  
Elisha Brown,  
Ezekiel Warner.

*October.*

Daniel Jenckes,  
William Hopkins,

John Potter, jun.

Peleg Williams, jun.

*1748. May.*

Daniel Jenckes,  
John Angell,  
Henry Harris,  
John Potter, jr.

*October.*

George Brown,  
Daniel Jenckes,  
Jonathan Randall,  
Stephen Hopkins.

*1749. May and Oct.*

Jonathan Randall,  
Stephen Hopkins,  
Elisha Brown,  
Daniel Jenckes,

*1750. May.*

Jonathan Randall,  
Elisha Brown,  
Christopher Harris,  
John Andrews.

*October.*

Jonathan Randall,  
Elisha Brown,  
John Dexter,  
Daniel Jenckes.

*1751. May.*

Stephen Hopkins,  
Elisha Brown,  
Joseph Wanton,  
Christopher Harris.

*October.*

Stephen Hopkins,  
Elisha Brown,  
Jonathan Randall,  
Arthur Fenner.

*1752. May.*

Stephen Hopkins,  
Elisha Brown,  
Jonathan Randall,  
George Brown.

*October.*

Stephen Hopkins,  
Jonathan Randall,  
Elisha Brown,  
Ephraim Bowen.

*1753. May and Oc-  
tober.*

Jonathan Randall,  
Elisha Brown,  
Daniel Jenckes,  
George Brown.

*1754. May.*

Jonathan Randall,  
Daniel Jenckes,  
Thomas Olney,  
John Potter, jr.



*October.*  
Daniel Jenckes,  
Thomas Olney,  
Nicholas Brown,  
Richard Waterman.

*1755. May.*  
Daniel Jenckes,  
Nicholas Brown,  
George Brown,  
George Harris.  
Henry Harris.

*October.*  
Elisha Brown,  
Nicholas Brown,  
George Brown,  
Daniel Jenckes.

*1756. May and Oct.*  
Elisha Brown,  
Nicholas Brown,  
Henry Harris,  
George Brown.

*1757. May.*  
William Smith,  
Christopher Harris,  
Daniel Jenckes,  
James Olney.

*October.*  
Stephen Hopkins,  
Elisha Brown,  
Daniel Jenckes,  
John Andrews.

*1758. May.*  
Obadiah Brown,  
Charles Olney,  
William Smith,  
Barzillai Richmond.

*October.*  
Obadiah Brown,  
Charles Olney,  
Christopher Harris,  
Barzillai Richmond.

*1759. May.*  
Isaiah Hawkins,  
Daniel Jenckes,  
Obadiah Brown,  
John Bass.

*October.*  
Joseph Turpin,  
Daniel Jenckes,  
Gideon Comstock,  
Isaiah Hawkins.

*1760. May.*  
Daniel Jenckes,  
Joseph Turpin,  
Isaiah Hawkins,  
Stephen Rawson.

*October.*  
Daniel Jenckes,  
Abraham Smith,

Isaiah Hawkins,  
Stephen Rawson.

*1761. May and Oct.*  
Daniel Jenckes,  
George Jackson,  
Samuel Chace,  
Charles Olney.  
*Vice,* Abraham Smith  
rejected by the Assem-  
bly.

*1762. May.*  
Daniel Jenckes,  
Joseph Nash,  
Joseph Olney, jr.  
George Jackson.

*October.*  
Daniel Jenckes,  
George Jackson,  
James Angell,  
Esek Hopkins.

*1763. May.*  
Same as October prece-  
ding.

*October.*  
Daniel Jenckes,  
James Angell,  
Benjamin Man,  
Esek Hopkins.

*1764. May.*  
Daniel Jenckes,  
Moses Brown,  
Jacob Whitman,  
Esek Hopkins.

*October.*  
Daniel Jenckes,  
Moses Brown,  
Jacob Whitman,  
John Cole.

*1765. May.*  
Daniel Jenckes,  
Moses Brown,  
Jacob Whitman,  
Charles Olney.

*October.*  
Daniel Jenckes,  
Moses Brown,  
John Cole,  
Samuel Nightingale.

*1766. May.*  
Daniel Jenckes,  
Moses Brown,  
John Cole,  
George Jackson.

*October.*  
Daniel Jenckes,  
Moses Brown,  
John Cole,  
Samuel Nightingale.

*1767. May.*  
Daniel Jenckes,  
Moses Brown,  
John Cole,  
Thomas Greene.

*October.*  
Daniel Jenckes,  
Moses Brown,  
Thomas Greene,  
James Angell.

*1768. May.*  
Daniel Jenckes,  
Moses Brown,  
George Jackson,  
Charles Keene.

*October.*  
Thomas Greene,  
Moses Brown,  
George Jackson,  
Charles Keene.

*1769. May.*  
Daniel Jenckes,  
Moses Brown,  
Benoni Pearce,  
Job Smith.

*October.*  
Daniel Jenckes,  
Moses Brown,  
Benjamin Man,  
Job Smith.

*1770. May and Oct.*  
Daniel Jenckes,  
Moses Brown,  
Benjamin Man,  
Stephen Hopkins.

*1771. May.*  
Same as 1770.

*October.*  
Stephen Hopkins,  
Moses Brown,  
Benjamin Man,  
John Jenckes.

*1772. May and Oct.*  
Stephen Hopkins,  
Thomas Greene,  
Benjamin Man,  
John Jenckes.

*1773. May.*  
Stephen Hopkins,  
Benjamin Man,  
John Jenckes,  
John Smith.

*October.*  
Stephen Hopkins,  
John Jenckes,  
John Smith,  
John Mathewson.



1774. *May*.  
Same as October 1773.  
*October*.  
Stephen Hopkins,  
John Jenckes,  
John Smith,  
John Mathewson.  
1775. *May and October*.  
Same as October 1774.  
1776. *May*.  
Jonathan Arnold,  
John Brown,  
John Smith,  
Amos Atwell.  
*October*.  
Jonathan Arnold,  
John Brown,  
John Smith,  
John Mathewson.  
1777. *May*.  
Jonathan Arnold,  
John Brown,  
John Smith,  
William Rhodes.  
*October*.  
Stephen Hopkins,  
John Updike,  
Jabez Bowen,  
Theodore Foster.  
1778. *May*.  
John Updike,  
Elihu Robinson,  
Theodore Foster,  
Paul Allen.  
*October*.  
John Brown,  
Theodore Foster,  
Welcome Arnold,  
Thomas Greene.  
1779. *May*.  
John Brown,  
Theodore Foster,  
Welcome Arnold,  
David Howell.  
*October*.  
Theodore Foster,  
Welcome Arnold,  
David Howell,  
John I. Clarke.  
1780. *May*.  
Welcome Arnold,  
David Howell,  
Darius Sessions,  
Benoni Pearce.  
*October*.  
Welcome Arnold,  
Charles Keene,  
Joseph Brown,  
Theodore Foster.  
1781. *May and October*.  
Same as October 1780.  
1782. *May*.  
Welcome Arnold,  
John Smith,  
John Brown,  
William Barton.  
*October*.  
Welcome Arnold,  
John Smith,  
John Brown,  
Paul Allen.  
1783. *May*.  
John Smith,  
John Brown,  
Paul Allen,  
Thomas Jenkins.  
*October*.  
John Smith,  
John Brown,  
Paul Allen,  
Ebenezer Thompson.  
1784. *May*.  
Joseph Nightingale,  
Paul Allen,  
Ebenezer Thompson,  
John Jenckes.  
*October*.  
Joseph Nightingale,  
John Jenckes,  
Paul Allen,  
Charles Keene.  
1785. *May and October*.  
John Jenckes,  
Paul Allen,  
Charles Keene,  
Jeremiah Olney.  
1786. *May*.  
John Jenckes,  
John Brown,  
Charles Keene,  
Thomas Truman.  
*October*.  
John Jenckes,  
John Brown,  
Charles Keene,  
Benjamin Bourne.  
1787. *May*.  
John Brown,  
Welcome Arnold,  
Benjamin Bourne,  
Joseph Nightingale.  
*October*.  
Welcome Arnold,  
Benjamin Bourne,  
Joseph Nightingale,  
Nathaniel Wheaton.  
1788. *May and October*.  
John Jenckes,  
Jabez Bowen,  
William Barton,  
Amos Throop.  
1789. *May and October*.  
John Jenckes,  
Jabez Bowen,  
Benjamin Bourne,  
Amasa Gray.  
1790. *May*.  
Jabez Bowen,  
Benjamin Bourne,  
Amasa Gray,  
Welcome Arnold.  
*October*.  
Welcome Arnold,  
Amos Atwell,  
Robert Newell,  
Sylvanus Martin.  
1791. *May*.  
Welcome Arnold,  
Amos Atwell,  
Samuel Nightingale,  
Sylvanus Martin.  
*October*.  
Welcome Arnold,  
Amos Atwell,  
Robert Newell,  
David Howell.  
1792. *May and October*.  
Welcome Arnold,  
Charles Lippitt,  
Robert Newell,  
Nicholas Easton.  
1793. *May*.  
Welcome Arnold,  
Charles Lippitt,  
John Whipple,  
Nicholas Easton.  
*October*.  
Welcome Arnold,  
Charles Lippitt,  
John Smith,  
Nicholas Easton.  
1794. *May and October*.  
Same as October 1793.  
1795. *May*.  
Same as October 1793.  
*October*.  
Welcome Arnold,  
Charles Lippitt,  
John Smith,  
Richard Jackson, jr.  
1796. *May and October*.  
Same as October 1795.  
1797. *May*.  
Welcome Arnold,



- John Smith,  
Thomas P. Ives,  
James Burrill, jr.  
*October.*  
Welcome Arnold,  
John Smith,  
Thomas P. Ives,  
William Rhodes.  
*1798. May.*  
Welcome Arnold,  
John Smith,  
William Rhodes,  
Richard Jackson, jr.  
*October.*  
John Smith,  
William Rhodes,  
Richard Jackson, jr.  
Moses Lippitt.  
*1799. May.*  
John Smith,  
William Rhodes,  
Richard Jackson, jr.  
Thomas P. Ives.  
*October.*  
John Smith,  
William Rhodes,  
Thomas P. Ives,  
David L. Barnes.  
*1800. May and October.*  
Same as October 1799.  
*1801. May.*  
Same as October 1799.  
*October.*  
Charles Lippitt,  
John Dorrance,  
Ephraim Bowen, jr.  
John Carlile.  
*1802. May.*  
Same as October 1801.  
*October.*  
John Dorrance,  
Ephraim Bowen, jr.  
John Carlile,  
George R. Burrill.  
*1803. May.*  
Same as October 1802.  
*October.*  
John Dorrance,  
William Larned,  
Benjamin Hoppin,  
George R. Burrill.  
*1804. May.*  
Same as October 1803.  
*October.*  
Amos Throop,  
George R. Burrill,  
James B. Mason,  
Peter Grinnell.
- 1805. May and October.*  
Same as October 1804.  
*1806. May and October.*  
Same as October 1804.  
*1807. May.*  
Same as October 1804.  
*October.*  
William Jones,  
James B. Mason,  
Richard Jackson, jr.  
Samuel W. Bridgham.  
*1808. May.*  
Same as October 1807.  
*October.*  
William Jones,  
James B. Mason,  
Nicholas Brown,  
Samuel W. Bridgham.  
*1809. May and October.*  
Same as October 1808.  
*1810. May and October.*  
Same as October 1808.  
*1811. May and October.*  
James B. Mason,  
Samuel W. Bridgham,  
Tristram Burges,  
Benjamin Hoppin.  
*1812. May and October.*  
James B. Mason,  
Samuel W. Bridgham,  
Benjamin Hoppin,  
Peter Grinnell.  
*1813. May.*  
Same as October 1812.  
*October.*  
James B. Mason,  
James Burrill, jr.  
Benjamin Hoppin,  
William Wilkinson.  
*1815. May and October.*  
James Burrill, jr.  
William Wilkinson,  
Nathaniel Searle, jr.  
Ephraim Talbot.  
*1815. May.*  
Same as October 1814.  
*October.*  
James Burrill, jr.  
William Wilkinson,  
Nathaniel Searle, jr.  
Samuel G. Arnold.  
*1816. May.*  
Same as October 1815.  
*October.*  
William Wilkinson,  
Nathaniel Searle, jr.  
Samuel G. Arnold,  
Stephen Waterman.
- 1817. May and October.*  
Same as October 1816.  
*1818. May.*  
Same as October 1816.  
*October.*  
Nicholas Brown,  
Nathaniel Searle, jr.  
Samuel G. Arnold,  
Stephen Waterman.  
*1819. May.*  
Same as October 1818.  
*1819. October.*  
Nicholas Brown,  
Nathaniel Searle, jr.  
Stephen Waterman,  
Philip Allen.  
*1820. May and Oct.*  
Same as October, 1819.  
*1821. May and Oct.*  
Nicholas Brown,  
Nathaniel Searle, jr.  
Philip Allen,  
Samuel Dexter.  
*1822. May and Oct.*  
Nicholas Brown,  
Nathaniel Searle, jr.  
Stanford Newell,  
Samuel Dexter.  
*1823. May.*  
Edward Carrington,  
Samuel W. Bridgham,  
Stanford Newell,  
Thomas Burgess.  
*1824. May.*  
Same as October 1823.  
*October.*  
Edward Carrington,  
Samuel W. Bridgham,  
Stanford Newell,  
Thomas Burgess.  
*1824. May.*  
Same as October 1823.  
*October.*  
Edward Carrington,  
Samuel W. Bridgham,  
Stanford Newell,  
Elisha Dyer.  
*1825. May and Oct.*  
Same as October 1824.  
*1826. May.*  
Edward Carrington,  
Samuel W. Bridgham,  
Stanford Newell,  
Lemuel H. Arnold.  
*October.*  
Caleb Earle,  
Joseph L. Tillinghast,  
Stanford Newell,  
Lemuel H. Arnold.



1827. *May*.  
Same as October 1826.  
*October*.

Edward Carrington,  
Joseph L. Tillinghast,  
Zachariah Allen,  
Lemuel H. Arnold.

1828. *May and Oct*.  
Edward Carrington,  
Joseph L. Tillinghast,  
Zachariah Allen,  
John Andrews.

1829. *May and Oc-*  
*tober*.

Edward Carrington,  
Joseph L. Tillinghast,  
Peter Pratt,  
Lemuel H. Arnold.

1830. *May and Oc-*  
*tober*.

Joseph L. Tillinghast,  
Peter Pratt,  
Lemuel H. Arnold,  
William Church.

1831. *May*.  
Same as 1830.  
*October*.

Joseph L. Tillinghast,  
Peter Pratt,  
William Pabodie,  
William Church.

1832. *May*.  
Joseph L. Tillinghast,  
Peter Pratt,  
William Pabodie,  
George Curtis.

#### TOWN CLERKS.

Thomas Olney, jr.  
Shadrach Manton,  
John Whipple,  
John Smith,  
Roger Williams,  
John Whipple,  
Daniel Abbott,  
John Whipple,  
Thomas Olney,  
Richard Waterman,

1664 to 1667  
1667 to 1670  
1670 to 1672  
1672 to 1675  
1675 to 1676  
1676 to 1677  
1677 to 1681  
1681 to 1683  
1683 to 1715  
1715 to  
Aug. 1744

Richard Waterman, 1744 to 1755  
Nicholas Tillinghast, 1755 to 1758  
James Angell, 1758 to 1775  
Theodore Foster, 1775 to 1787  
Daniel Cooke, 1787 to  
Nov. 1793  
George Tillinghast, 1793 to 1799  
Nathan W. Jackson, 1799 to  
Dec. 15, 1829  
Richard M. Field,

#### TOWN TREASURERS.

Henry Brown,  
Zachary Rhodes,  
Henry Brown,  
Thomas Clemence,  
John Whipple,  
Thomas Olney,  
Arthur Fenner,  
Thomas Field,  
John Throckmorton,  
William Hopkins,  
John Whipple,  
Henry Brown,  
Pardon Tillinghast,

1664  
1665  
1666  
1667  
1668  
1669  
1672  
1674  
1677  
1682  
1683  
1687  
1707

James Dexter, 1711  
James Brown, 1714  
William Harris, 1717  
James Brown, 1718  
William Harris, 1720  
Thomas Olney, 1722  
William Turpin, 1737  
Charles Tillinghast, 1743  
William Turpin, to April 1844  
Joseph Sheldon, 1771  
James Arnold, to Aug. 1797  
Samuel Nightingale, to Aug. 1814  
George Olney, 1818  
John Howland.

#### TOWN COUNCILS.

1664.  
Arthur Fenner,  
Thomas Harris, sen.  
John Brown.  
1665.  
Thomas Olney, sen.  
Zachary Rhodes,  
Thomas Harris, sen.  
1666.  
Thomas Olney, sen.  
Richard Waterman,  
Thomas Harris, sen.  
1667.  
John Throckmorton,  
Anthony Everden,

Thomas Hopkins, sen.  
1668.  
Not on records.  
1669.  
Thomas Olney, sen.  
Thomas Harris, sen.  
John Whipple, sen.  
1670.  
Thomas Olney,  
William Harris,  
John Sayles.  
1671.  
Thomas Olney, sen.  
John Sayles,  
Thomas Olney, jr.

1672.  
Thomas Arnold,  
Anthony Everden,  
Thomas Hopkins, sen.  
1673.  
William Carpenter,  
Arthur Fenner,  
Thomas Olney, jr.  
1674.  
Thomas Olney, sen.  
Thomas Olney, jr.  
John Whipple, jr.  
1675. Not on records.  
1676.  
Thomas Arnold,



Nathaniel Waterman,  
Roger Williams.

1677.

Thomas Olney,  
Arthur Fenner,  
William Harris.

1678.

Roger Williams,  
Arthur Fenner,  
Edward Smith.

1679.

Roger Williams,  
Henry Brown,  
Edward Smith.

1680.

Roger Williams,  
Henry Brown,  
Thomas Arnold.

1681.

Thomas Olney,  
William Hopkins,  
John Whipple,  
Edward Smith,  
Nathaniel Waterman,  
Thomas Field.

1682.

Thomas Olney, jr.  
William Hopkins,  
Nathaniel Waterman,  
Thomas Field,  
Edward Smith,  
John Whipple.

1683.

Thomas Olney,  
Nathaniel Waterman,  
Thomas Field,  
William Hopkins,  
Edward Smith,  
Thomas Arnold.

1684.

Thomas Olney,  
Thomas Arnold,  
Edward Smith,  
Joseph Williams,  
Thomas Harris, jr.  
Eleazer Arnold.

1685.

Thomas Olney,  
Edward Smith,  
Joseph Williams,  
Thomas Harris, jr.  
Thomas Arnold,  
Eleazer Arnold.

1686.

Thomas Olney,  
Edward Smith,  
Joseph Williams,  
Nathaniel Waterman,

Thomas Harris,  
Eleazer Arnold.

1687. *Selectmen.*

John Whipple,  
Nathaniel Waterman,  
Thomas Field,  
William Hopkins,  
Joseph Williams.

1688. *Selectmen.*

Pardon Tillinghast,  
Edward Smith,  
John Dexter,  
Nathaniel Waterman,  
Thomas Field,  
Joseph Williams.

1689.

Not on records.

1690.

Not on records.

1691 and 1693.

Thomas Olney,  
Pardon Tillinghast,  
William Hopkins,  
Nathaniel Waterman,  
Joseph Williams,  
Benjamin Carpenter.

1693.

Pardon Tillinghast,  
\_\_\_\_\_,  
Nathaniel Waterman,  
Joseph Williams,  
\_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_,

Thomas Olney.

1694.

Pardon Tillinghast,  
Nathaniel Waterman,  
Joseph Williams,  
William Hopkins,  
Benjamin Carpenter,  
Thomas Olney.

1695.

Pardon Tillinghast,  
Nathaniel Waterman,  
William Hopkins,  
Epenetus Olney.

\_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_,

1696 and 1697.

Pardon Tillinghast,  
Nathaniel Waterman,  
Epenetus Olney,  
William Hopkins,  
Benjamin Carpenter,  
Thomas Olney.

1698.

Thomas Olney,  
Pardon Tillinghast,  
William Hopkins,

Benjamin Carpenter,  
Roger Burlingame,  
Thomas Fenner.

1699.

William Hopkins,  
Pardon Tillinghast,  
John Dexter,  
Benjamin Carpenter,  
Thomas Fenner,  
Thomas Olney.

1700 and 1701.

Pardon Tillinghast,  
Richard Arnold,  
John Dexter,  
Nathaniel Waterman,  
Thomas Fenner,  
Thomas Olney.

1702.

Thomas Olney,  
Pardon Tillinghast,  
Thomas Field,  
Nathaniel Waterman,  
Samuel Wilkinson,  
Thomas Fenner.

1703 and 1704.

Thomas Olney,  
Pardon Tillinghast,  
Nathaniel Waterman,  
Thomas Field,  
Thomas Fenner,  
Joseph Whipple.

1705 and 1706.

Pardon Tillinghast,  
Thomas Fenner,  
Nathaniel Waterman,  
Jonathan Sprague,  
James Brown,  
Thomas Olney.

1707.

Pardon Tillinghast,  
William Hopkins,  
Nathaniel Waterman,  
Jonathan Sprague,  
James Brown,  
Thomas Olney.

1708-1709-1710 & 1711.

Thomas Olney,  
Jonathan Sprague,  
Nathaniel Waterman,  
William Hopkins,  
James Brown,  
Richard Brown.

1712.

Thomas Olney,  
Jonathan Sprague,  
William Hopkins,  
James Brown,  
Richard Brown,



John Smith.

1713.

Thomas Olney,  
Sylvanus Scott,  
William Olney,  
William Harris,  
Daniel Abbott,

*Also,*

Thomas Olney,  
Joseph Williams,  
William Hopkins,  
Joseph Jenckes,  
James Brown,  
Nicholas Power.

1714.

Thomas Olney,  
Joseph Williams,  
William Hopkins,  
Sylvanus Scott,  
William Harris,  
Edward Smith.

1715.

Joseph Williams,  
William Hopkins,  
Joseph Whipple,  
William Harris,  
Sylvanus Scott,  
Edward Smith.

1716 and 1717.

Joseph Whipple,  
Arthur Fenner,  
Thomas Harris,  
Sylvanus Scott,  
William Harris,  
Edward Smith.

1718.

Joseph Whipple,  
Thomas Harris,  
Sylvanus Scott,  
Edward Smith,  
William Crawford,  
William Harris.

1719 and 1720.

Joseph Whipple,  
Thomas Harris,  
Edward Smith,  
Nathaniel Jenckes,  
James Brown,  
Philip Tillinghast.

1721.

Joseph Whipple,  
James Olney,  
Nicholas Power,  
Philip Tillinghast,  
Nathaniel Jenckes,  
Thomas Harris.

1722 and 1723.

Joseph Whipple,  
Arthur Fenner,  
Nathaniel Jenckes,  
William Smith,  
James Olney,  
Thomas Harris.

1724.

William Smith,  
Thomas Harris,  
James Olney,  
Philip Tillinghast,  
Peleg Rhodes,  
James Dexter.

1725.

Joseph Whipple,  
Philip Tillinghast,  
James Brown,  
James Olney,  
James Dexter,  
Thomas Olney.

1726.

Joseph Whipple,  
Philip Tillinghast,  
James Olney,  
James Dexter,  
Thomas Olney,  
John Angell.

1727.

Joseph Whipple,  
Philip Tillinghast,  
William Turpin,  
James Olney,  
Stephen Dexter,  
James Williams.

1728.

Joseph Whipple,  
Philip Tillinghast,  
William Smith,  
John Angell,  
John Potter, jr.  
James Olney.

1729.

Joseph Whipple,  
Philip Tillinghast,  
Nicholas Power,  
James Olney,  
Stephen Dexter,  
John Potter, jr.

1730.

Philip Tillinghast,  
Nicholas Power,  
John Potter,  
Benjamin Smith,  
Thomas Field,  
Richard Fenner.

1731.

Philip Tillinghast,

Richard Waterman,  
Stephen Dexter,  
James Congdon,  
John Thornton,  
Nathaniel Jenckes.

1732.

James Congdon,  
John Thornton,  
Stephen Dexter,  
Edward Fenner,  
Nathaniel Jenckes,  
Thomas Burlingame.

1733.

James Congdon,  
John Thornton,  
Stephen Dexter,  
Edward Fenner,  
Thomas Burlingame,  
Hope Angell.

1734.

Richard Waterman,  
Stephen Dexter,  
James Congdon,  
Hope Angell,  
John Thornton,  
Benjamin Carpenter.

1735 and 1736.

Stephen Dexter,  
Hope Angell,  
John Thornton,  
Benjamin Carpenter,  
Zuriel Waterman,  
Charles Tillinghast.

1737 and 1738.

William Hopkins,  
Hope Angell,  
John Thornton,  
Benjamin Carpenter,  
Zuriel Waterman,  
Charles Tillinghast.

1739.

William Hopkins,  
Hope Angell,  
Richard Fenner,  
Benjamin Carpenter,  
Zuriel Waterman,  
Charles Tillinghast.

1740.

Daniel Smith,  
Hope Angell,  
William Burton,  
Charles Tillinghast,  
Thomas Harris, jr.  
Zuriel Waterman.

1741.

William Burton,  
John Whipple,  
Daniel Smith,



Charles Tillinghast,  
Thomas Harris, jr.  
Zuriel Waterman.  
1742.

William Burton.  
Daniel Smith,  
Thomas Harris,  
Zuriel Waterman,  
John Whipple,  
Thomas Field.  
1743.

George Brown,  
Daniel Gould,  
Thomas Harris,  
Zuriel Waterman,  
John Whipple,  
Christopher Lippitt.  
1744.

George Brown,  
Daniel Smith,  
Thomas Harris,  
Zuriel Waterman,  
John Whipple,  
Christopher Lippitt.  
1745 and 1746.

George Brown,  
Daniel Smith,  
Thomas Harris,  
Zuriel Waterman,  
John Whipple,  
Thomas Olney, jr.  
1747.

George Brown,  
Daniel Smith,  
Thomas Harris,  
Zuriel Waterman,  
Thomas Olney, jr.  
Benjamin Potter, jr.  
1748.

George Brown,  
Thomas Harris,  
Zuriel Waterman,  
Thomas Olney, jr.  
Benjamin Potter,  
Obadiah Brown.  
1749.

George Brown,  
Joseph Olney,  
Thomas Harris,  
Zuriel Waterman,  
Thomas Olney, jr.  
Benjamin Potter.  
1750.

George Brown,  
John Dexter,  
John Burton,  
Zuriel Waterman,  
Thomas Olney,

John Randall,  
1751.

George Brown,  
John Dexter,  
John Burton,  
Zuriel Waterman,  
Jonathan Jenckes,  
John Randall.  
1752.

George Brown,  
Jonathan Olney,  
John Potter, jr.  
Zuriel Waterman,  
Jonathan Jenckes,  
John Randall.  
1753.

George Brown,  
Jonathan Olney,  
John Potter, jr.  
Zuriel Waterman,  
Obadiah Brown,  
John Gorton.  
1754.

Daniel Jenckes,  
Jonathan Olney,  
Barzillai Richmond,  
Zuriel Waterman,  
Isaiah Hawkins,  
John Gorton.  
1755 and 1756.

Daniel Jenckes,  
Jonathan Olney,  
Barzillai Richmond,  
Isaiah Hawkins,  
Nathaniel Sweeting,  
John Waterman.  
1757.

George Brown,  
Jonathan Olney,  
Barzillai Richmond,  
Isaiah Hawkins,  
Paul Tew,  
John Waterman.  
1758.

Paul Tew,  
Jonathan Olney,  
Barzillai Richmond,  
Isaiah Hawkins,  
William Pearce,  
John Waterman.  
1759 and 1760.

John Andrews,  
Jonathan Olney,  
Barzillai Richmond,  
Isaiah Hawkins,  
William Pearce,  
Samuel Currie.

1761.

John Andrews,  
Samuel Nightingale,  
Jonathan Olney,  
Isaiah Hawkins,  
William Pearce,  
Samuel Currie.  
1762, 1763 and 1764

John Cole,  
Isaiah Hawkins,  
John Jenckes,  
Jonathan Jenckes,  
Samuel Currie,  
Amos Atwell.  
1765.

John Cole,  
Isaiah Hawkins,  
John Jenckes,  
Jonathan Jenckes,  
George Taylor,  
Amos Atwell.  
1766.

John Cole,  
John Jenckes,  
Amos Atwell,  
James Angell,  
Nicholas Brown,  
John Field.  
1767 and 1768.

John Cole,  
John Jenckes,  
Nicholas Brown,  
John Field,  
George Jackson,  
Charles Keene.  
1769.

John Cole,  
John Jenckes,  
Nicholas Brown,  
John Field,  
Charles Keene,  
Jacob Whitman.  
1770.

John Cole,  
John Jenckes,  
Nicholas Brown,  
Joseph Russell,  
Charles Keene,  
Jacob Whitman.  
1771 and 1772.

Same as 1769.

1773, 1774 and 1775  
George Taylor,  
Richard Jackson,  
Benjamin Thurber,  
Jabez Bowen,  
John Mathewson,  
Job Sweeting.



1776.  
George Taylor,  
John Mathewson,  
Job Sweeting,  
Ebenezer Thompson,  
Daniel Cahoon,  
Christopher Sheldon.  
1777.  
John Mathewson,  
Christopher Sheldon,  
Edward Thurber,  
Arthur Fenner, jr.  
Benoni Pearce,  
Benjamin Cushing, jr.  
1778.  
Arthur Fenner, jr.  
Christopher Sheldon,  
Benjamin Cushing, jr.  
Elihu Robinson.  
Zephaniah Andrews,  
William Wall.  
1779 and 1780.  
Arthur Fenner, jr.  
Christopher Sheldon,  
Benjamin Cushing, jr.  
Paul Allen,  
Samuel Butler,  
David Lawrence.  
1781 and 1782.  
Amos Atwell,  
Christopher Sheldon,  
Paul Allen,  
Samuel Butler,  
Nathaniel Wheeler,  
Benoni Pearce.  
1783.  
Amos Atwell,  
Christopher Sheldon,  
Paul Allen,  
Samuel Butler,  
Ebenezer Thompson,  
Aaron Mason.  
1784, 1785 and 1786.  
Ebenezer Thompson,  
Paul Allen,  
Samuel Butler,  
Aaron Mason,  
Richard Jackson,  
Nicholas Power.  
1787, 1788 and 1789.  
Ebenezer Thompson,  
Paul Allen,  
Samuel Butler,  
Aaron Mason,  
Nathaniel Wheaton,  
Nicholas Power.  
1790.  
Ebenezer Thompson,  
Nathaniel Jacobs,  
Samuel Butler,  
Aaron Mason,  
Nathaniel Wheaton,  
John Davis.  
1791 and 1792.  
Ebenezer Thompson,  
Samuel Butler,  
Aaron Mason,  
Nathaniel Wheaton,  
John Mason,  
John Davis.  
1793 and 1794.  
John Mason,  
Samuel Butler,  
Aaron Mason,  
Nathaniel Wheaton,  
John Davis,  
James Burrill.  
1795.  
Amos Atwell,  
Samuel Butler,  
Sylvanus Martin,  
Joel Metcalf,  
Seth Wheaton,  
Zephaniah Brown.  
1796.  
Amos Atwell,  
Rufus Waterman,  
Sylvanus Martin,  
Joel Metcalf,  
Seth Wheaton,  
Zephaniah Brown.  
1797.  
John Dorrance,  
Sylvanus Martin,  
Joel Metcalf,  
Thomas L. Halsey,  
Jonathan Treadwell,  
Samuel Eddy.  
1798.  
John Dorrance,  
Sylvanus Martin,  
Joel Metcalf,  
Thomas L. Halsey,  
Jonathan Treadwell,  
Moses Lippitt.  
1799 and 1800.  
John Dorrance,  
Joel Metcalf,  
Benjamin Hoppin,  
Grindall Reynolds,  
Joseph Jenckes,  
Jabez Bullock.  
1801, 1802 and 1803.  
John Dorrance,  
Abner Daggett,  
Benjamin Hoppin,  
Joseph Jenckes,  
Jabez Bullock.  
1804-1805-1806 & 1807.  
John Dorrance,  
Joseph Jenckes,  
Jabez Bullock,  
Nathan Waterman,  
Young Seamans.  
1808-1809-1810-1811  
and 1812.  
John Dorrance,  
Joseph Jenckes,  
Nathan Waterman,  
Young Seamans,  
Oliver Earle.  
1813.  
John Dorrance,  
Nathan Waterman,  
Young Seamans,  
Oliver Earle,  
George Olney.  
1814.  
William Richmond,  
Nathan Waterman,  
Young Seamans,  
Oliver Earle,  
George Olney.  
1815.  
William Richmond,  
Young Seamans,  
Oliver Earle,  
Stephen Tillinghast,  
Thomas L. Halsey.  
1816.  
William Richmond,  
Richmond Bullock,  
Oliver Earle,  
Thomas Burgess,  
Amasa Mason.  
1817.  
William Richmond,  
Richmond Bullock,  
Oliver Earle,  
Stephen Tillinghast,  
Stanford Newell.  
1818 and 1819.  
William Richmond,  
John Carlile,  
Oliver Earle,  
Stanford Newell,  
Walter R. Danforth.  
1820-1821-1822 & 1823.  
William Richmond,  
John Carlile,  
Richmond Bullock,  
Walter R. Danforth,  
Zachariah Allen.



1824.	William T. Grinnell,	Charles Holden,
William Richmond,	Stanford Newell,	Amasa Mason.
John Carlile,	Walter R. Danforth,	1830.
William Wilkinson,	Charles Holden.	Richmond Bullock,
Walter R. Danforth,	1828.	Stanford Newell,
Zachariah Allen.	Richmond Bullock,	Charles Holden,
1825.	William T. Grinnell,	Anthony B. Arnold,
Richmond Bullock,	Peter Pratt,	Hezekiah Anthony.
John Pitman, (declined.)	Stephen Branch,	1831.
Stanford Newell,	Charles Holden.	Richmond Bullock,
Zachariah Allen,	1829.	John H. Ormsbee,
Walter R. Danforth,	Richmond Bullock,	Charles Holden,
William T. Grinnell.	William T. Grinnell,	William Sheldon,
1826 and 1827.	Stanford Newell,	Henry P. Franklin.
Richmond Bullock,		

## COLLECTORS OF THE PORT.

Jeremiah Olney,	Walter R. Danforth,
Thomas Coles,	William R. Watson.

List of those who have addressed the citizens of Providence on the anniversary of American Independence.

1788	Enos Hitchcock.	1810	Tristram Burges.
1789	None.	1811	John Whipple.
1790	None.	1812	Joseph L. Tillinghast.
1791	Enos Hitchcock.	1813	John Holroyd.
1792	None.	1814	Jeremiah Lippitt.
1793	Enos Hitchcock.	1815	Charles N. Tibbitts.
1794	George Tillinghast.	1816	Christopher C. Dexter.
1795	Jonathan Maxcy.	1817	Samuel Y. Atwell.
1796	Paul Allen.	1818	Richard W. Greene.
1797	George R. Burrill.	1819	Joseph W. Torrey.
1798	Samuel W. Bridgham.	1820	William R. Staples.
1799	Jonathan Maxcy.	1821	Peter Pratt.
1800	Jonathan Russell.	1822	None.
1801	Tristram Burges.	1823	Albert G. Greene.
1802	Nathaniel Bowen.	1824	Benjamin F. Hallett.
1803	Asa Messer.	1825	Peter Ludlow.
1804	James Wilson.	1826	William Hunter.
1805	George R. Burrill.	1827	None.
1806	John Whipple.	1828	David Pickering.
1807	Henry Bowen.	1829	None.
1808	John Mackie.	1830	John H. Clifford.
1809	John B. Snow.	1831	Tristram Burges.



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